Are you Free or Slave

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Publisher: Jami'at ul-Athar



بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

Are you Free or Slave

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:Published in print

Jami'at ul-Athar

:Digital Publisher

Ghaemiyeh center of computerized researches

Contents

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BOOK ID

Author(s): Muhammad Rayshahri

Publisher(s): Jami'at ul-Athar

Category: General Politics Current Affairs General

?Topic Tags: Free Will Freedom Miscellaneous information: Are you Free or Slave

.Author: Mohammadi-ye Reyshahari

.Published by Jami'at ul-Athar, London UK

.Published in ۱۹۹۲ in Karachi, Pakistan

point

Are you Free or Slave?" covers the foremost factor "belief" and the ground of its" formation in men, is the outcome of lectures that the esteemed author has delivered .in the session of a group of university and theology school students

From Publisher's Desk

Inspite of the fact that well-over ۴۰۰ years have passed from the advent of Islam as perfect religion that addressed the human being and society yet this has not been .well understood by the people of the world

Jamiat-ul-Ather publications plan to do its best to explain Islam to the mankind. The .publication of this book is a step in this direction

Are you free or slave?" covers the foremost factor "belief" and the ground of its" formation in men, is the outcome of lectures that the esteemed author has delivered .in the session of a group of university and theology school students

Jamiat-ul-Athar hopes to meet this big challenge, we present this book and plan to

.translate and publish the books on other aspects of Islam afterwards

Foreword

The present work has its genesis in a series of lectures given to groups of young students at the Quran theological seminary that began in the academic year ۱۹۷۴-۷۵.These lectures which followed a novel method that will be described later, .continued up to ۱۹۷۸

After

the victory of the Islamic Revolution the writer continued to teach, lecturing groups of military personnel on such subjects as cognition, cognition of God, justice, and prophethood with each successive audience there were improvements in both form and content, resulting in no small measure from enthusiastic audience-participation. A final presentation of the material was as a series of lectures given to members of the .Islamic Revolutionary Guardian Corps (IRGC) on a remote - instruction basis

The lectures were later broadcast by IRTV, the Islamic Republic of Iran's television network, and they also appeared in the Maktab al-Enqclab '('Message of the Revolution') magazine published by the IRGC'S ideological and political instruction unit. In the spring of ۱۹۸۶, with the publication of the first volume of Osul al-Aqaycd Eslami ('Principles of Islamic Beliefs'), the text of which was based on the revised and expanded text of the lectures as published in Maktab al-Enqelab. Some new material, including sections on the correction of ideology and freedom of opinion, was added at .this time

The original purpose of these lectures and their published texts, which arc the fruit of many years of research into questions of Islamic ideology, was to help correct religious belief by exposing superstition and fostering sound ideology, particularly among ordinary Iranians and the other Persian-speakers to whom they were .addressed. The writer has been most gratified by the response so far evoked

It soon became evident; however, that one of the most significant effects of Iran's Islamic Revolution has been the growing interest

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in Islam which it has generated among people all over the world. It was therefore decided to produce an English language version of the first pamphlet of the first volume of Osul al-'Aqayed Eslami, and hopefully or the subsequent volumes, which .are at an advanced stage of preparation

The present English text is a translation of the original Persian with a small amount of additional explanatory material deemed useful to the English reader. It also incorporates some minor Corrections and revisions to the Persian original as .published

In humbling submitting this volume to a wider and relatively unknown readership, the writer hopes that his original purpose will be further served and that English-speaking Muslims will benefit from a fresh analysis of the ground work of their faith. At the same lime he has been encouraged to believe that there is an even larger group of potential readers in the world who have hitherto been deprived of an extensive survey of Islamic ideology. It is to this group in particular that the present pamphlet is .most respectfully dedicated

Mohammadi-ye Reyshahari

Tehran March ٢٠ ١٩٨٨

Chapter ١: Belief

Meaning Of Belief

The Persian word ‘aqideh’ meaning "belief or opinion is derived from the Arabic root .'aqd’ which has the sense of “tying', 'grafting' 'forming a knot’, and so on

Tying or grafting one object to another may be either literal and physical, such as when we graft a sapling or branch of a tree to another tree or figurative, such as the

.bond of matrimony, which binds husband to wife

,An 'aqideh' therefore

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is something which is figuratively 'tied ' or 'grafted' to a person's mind, thought or soul. When his mind accepts that the earth revolves around the sun, or that the sun, revolves around the earth; when it accepts that blood circulates in the body or does not circulate; when it accepts that the world has, or does not have, a creator; when it accepts that there is, or is not a life after death; when, in other words, a person accepts any theory either true or false, this theory is, as it were, tied or grafted or knotted to his mind, and the theory becomes a belief and part of that person's . ideology

The Role Of Belief

Since Ideology forms the basis of his quests and objectives in life it plays a crucial role :in man's individual and collective life. As the Quran states

.(Every man acts in accordance with his nature.' (١٧:٨۴'

What form a person's inner or real nature are his beliefs or ideology, and these are .what motivate and direct him in life

If a person's beliefs are correct and in accord with reality his life will follow a correct course, and if they are false his life will lead to a cul-de-sac. For this reason Islam attaches greater importance to the question of correcting beliefs than to anything .else

Without a doubt Islam sets greater store by a person's beliefs than does any other school of thought, and goes so far as to claim that belief is the proper yardstick by which

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to judge deeds, so that even a good deed, if it is not accompanied by soundness of belief, is without value.

As Imam Baqer says: 'No action is of value if it is based on doubt and denial.(۱) In other words, the soundness of an action, its role in a person's development and its 'usefulness' all depend on the soundness of the agent's beliefs.

If a person is ideologically unsound, and denies or doubts the truth, no action arising from his beliefs can be sound or useful, for it is his beliefs that motivate him and his motivation that gives direction to his deeds and it is the motivation and direction of his deeds that determine their meaning and intrinsic value.

For this reason Muslims believe that the first thing that happens when a person dies and enters the life to come is that in the preliminary examination of his life in this world he is asked what his beliefs were. The first questions are about his beliefs, not his deeds, such as what god and what religion did you believe in? And which leader did you follow?

Of all the world's religions and philosophies there is none that ascribes more value and importance to a person's belief s than does Islam. From the Islamic viewpoint, Ideological discussions are the most important of all discussions, and theological centers and universities in Islamic countries should pay more attention to ideological indoctrination and discussions than to other subjects.

A detailed understanding of the importance Islam attaches

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۱- Mohammad Mohammadi-ye Reyshahri Mizan al Hikma(Qom, ۱۳۶۲-۶۳)Vol. X, Hadith No. ۱۴۰۴۸.

to ideological debate requires a study or such subjects as ma'rifat (divine knowledge), fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), fikr (thought), 'aql (intellect) 'ilm (science), fatwa (rulings on points of jurisprudence), Taqlid (following authority) and ray (opinion in textbooks

of Islamic thought). A detailed study of such works is beyond the scope or this introduction.(1)

Here, we will restrict ourselves to quoting a hadith of Imam 'Ali, who is justly regarded as the greatest guide to belief and action that aptly illustrates the importance of ideological matters in the Islamic view.

According to Sheikh Saduq, the late ninth-century muhadith,(2) a certain Abu al-Muqaddam ibn Shorain, quoting his father, related that in the thick of the Battle of the Camel, which 'Ali fought against Internal counter-revolutionaries, just when 'Ali's warriors were gathered around him to decide on military plans and operations, a Bedouin stood up and said in a loud voice: 'O Commander of the Faithful do you believe in the unity of God?' To the rest of the warriors, who were totally absorbed in questions of military strategy, this question was quite unexpected.

They thought that if anyone wanted to ask the Imam a question it would be connected with the battle, the vital topic of the day. When they heard this nomad's ideological question, which apparently had nothing to do with the war and could be discussed and answered at a more appropriate time. They vented their spleen on this man for failing to appreciate situation they were in.

A Valuable Lesson

Imam 'Ali, however, when he saw

۱- This subject will be examined in subsequent chapters.

۲- One who reports hadith, the sayings of the Prophet and Imams, an important source of Islamic jurisprudence and ethical teachings.

the Bedouin coming under attack from all sides, rose to his defense, and delivered these historic words, which may serve as a clear indication of the importance and role of ideological discussion, and of the value of ideological indoctrination:

Let him ask his question and refrain from scolding him. For what this man of the" desert wants to know is the very question over which we are in dispute with our "!enemies

These words of Imam 'Ali, uttered in such circumstances are of extraordinary .importance and deserve close study

If we consider the Imam's situation at that critical time, when any moment could be decisive, we may well agree that he really did not have the time to reply to this question: be might have asked someone else to deal with it or proposed that it be left till later. But he neither referred it to someone else, nor postponed answering it, .because he wanted to teach the Muslims an important lesson

He wanted to teach them the philosophy of jihad, or holy war. He wanted to show them the importance of ideological questions, discussions and indoctrination. He wanted to say that if today Ali is fighting internal counter revolutionaries, and if tomorrow a descendant of 'Ali and the commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran is fighting internal and external counter revolutionaries and insists on continuing the war until the final victory, and if one-day the eleventh successor of 'Ali and Fatima, the promised Mahdi, is fighting world arrogance

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and atheism and all the Satanic forces of the age, and paints the earth red with their blood and cleanses the world from their pollution, all these wars are for Islam, all this fighting is to destroy the Satanic regimes that have prevented the blossoming of society's talents to free man from slavery a bondage, and to set him on the path .towards absolute perfection and sublimity, as his creator intend

It was for this reason that Imam 'Ali defended the Bedouin’s question at a critical and decisive moment, and used that brief opportunity to explain the philosophy of jihad and war. He told his followers to let the man ask his question and said that they were .fighting the war over precisely that question

Their objective was not conquest or exploitation, but rather divine philosophy and spiritual illumination. Their war was to destroy the obstacles and remove the veils that were preventing truth from being revealed. The Islamic philosophy of jihad is to free the people from the shackles of superstition, correct their ideology and permit true and scientific beliefs to flourish.(١)

So not only was the Bedouin's question not divorced from the main questions of the day- the war-but it had the closest possible relationship with it. After all, it was related to the philosophy of war and jihad and what bond is firmer than that between a thing and its philosophy?

For that reason the Imam turned to the Bedouin and with complete self-possession and precise detail answered his question

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١- This chapter will be discussed in chapter VI of this Introduction.

in these words:

'O Bedouin! The statement that God is one is based on four assumptions, two of which are not applicable to God Almighty, while the other two are correct and susceptible of proof.(١)

The Imam then explained each of the four assumptions. Since this matter of doctrine is not related to our present discussion and, God willing, will be dealt with in detail in a later chapter in our discussion of the unity of God, we shall not continue with the rest of the Imam's reply here.

The Philosophy of War According To The Prophet

As we have noted, Imam 'Ali defended ideological discussion as part of the philosophy of jihad. In this connection, there is a hadith of the Prophet of Islam according to which ideological discussion is examined in relation to the philosophy of war in a different light.

It is related that the Prophet was with a group of his companions one day and wanted to tell them about what constitutes the most valuable deeds in the sight of God and what is the surest path that an individual or society can take to ensure the avoidance of sin, and the pursuit of happiness in this world and the next. The companions had been undergoing exhausting ordeals, and thanks to their ceaseless efforts on the battlefield the foundations of an Islamic government and been laid for the first time in .that dark world

The' Prophet spoke to them in these Words: 'Nothing is dearer in God's sight, and nothing redeems a servant of God more surely in this

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.Mizan, Chapter ۲۶۲۸ -۱

'.life and the life to come than the invocation of His holy name

The companions imagined at that critical moment Islam required more than anything else resolution and courage on the battle field, and that therefore jihad in the path of God must be the most valuable of all deeds. They were therefore understandably surprised at his words, and one of them said to the Prophet, without concealing his '?astonishment: 'But what about fighting on God's behalf?' Isn't that more valuable

The Prophet of Islam then spoke these meaningful and deeply instructive words, which may be taken as a commentary on the value and importance of ideological discussion with regard to the philosophy of war and jihad: 'Without the invocation of (God's name there can be no lawful command to fight on His, behalf.(۱

War is intrinsically undesirable and jihad is in itself of no value. Their desirability and value to man in his pursuit of perfection and happiness only exist when they are 'in the path ·of God', and the objective of jihad 'in the path of God', is God and Islam. It follows that if God and the invocation of His name and Islam are not involved there can in principle be no war in the path of God, let alone any lawful command to fight .such a war

On the basis of this principle ideological discussion which acquaints a person with God and Islam in a fundamental and logical manner serves to give purpose and direction to war, and makes jihad

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.Ibid, hadith ١٣٣١ -١

in the path of God a first step towards the salvation of man and the perfection of society. It therefore follows that invoking God's name is of greater value than the .actual fighting because the act of invocation lies at the heart of the philosophy of war

Belief Indoctrination at The War Front

One or the interesting results we may obtain from this discussion in connection with the indoctrination classes arranged by the educational unit of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps is that now, the third year in which Revolutionary Corps has served at the front against the mercenaries of the B'athist regime,(١) the most .important question one that must not be neglected is the philosophy of war

The invocation of God's name is recognition of the philosophy of war without which a combatant gradually tries of fighting and becomes estranged from himself. For this reason, in addition to the need for prayer both day and night, participation in these ideological classes, as occasion permits, is essential and should not be missed, since once a combatant's ideological and spiritual foundations arc strengthened, if the war lasts not another three years, but another thirty years, or even more, if he knows God and had experienced the meaning of jihad in the path of God he will not tire of the war. There is a hadith to the effect that nobody wishes to return to this world except the martyrs who have experienced so much divine grace as a result of their martyrdom that they are eager to return to

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The literature on which this book based delivered during the third year of the - ١

.imposed war

(this world and be martyred once again!(۱)

Al the end of this talk some of you may want to ask why we should fight if invoking God's name is of greater value than war. Why don't we sit at home and pray or attend indoctrination classes in our own town s and villages? There is an Arabic proverb that '.says 'Take what you want and don't bother with how you get it

The answer to this question is that first, as I shall explain in detail later the meaning of invoking God's name or praying is not, according to the Islamic text simply verbal invocation A.s we saw in the hadith in question, the meaning of invocation is knowledge of Islamic thought and God and due regard for the philosophy of war not .merely saying God's name aloud

Secondly, to reach this kind of conclusion is as if someone were to say that studying is more valuable than eating, and someone else concluded from this remark that from .now on he should not eat but devote himself exclusively to study

In just the same way that eating is necessary precondition for studying; fighting with the enemies of God and of the divine order is a precondition for knowing God and invoking his name and we cannot neglect this precondition as an excuse to go straight to such invocation and knowledge, since if the enemies of God conquer our society .there will be no opportunity left to know God or invoke His holy name

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Ibid, Chapter ۲۱۱۴ -۱

Chapter ۲: Taqlid in Ideology

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Another problem which must be reconsidered before we embark on our discussion of convictions and the principles of Islamic beliefs is that of Taqlid(۱) in articles of faith .from the point of view of both reason and Islam

As a first step let us see how we acquire the basis of our beliefs if we reply urely on the judgement of reason. Does reason permi us to take as gospel. What we earn from pur parents, political parties, or organizations, scholars and trustworthy persons and so on, as the basis of for our beliefs on matters of convictions and worldview? In other words,does reason permit a person to practise Taqlid in convitional matters or must ?he investigate for himself

Once reason has supplied the answer to this question we must see what Islam has to say on the matter. Is the Islamic response the same as that of reason, or Islam supply ?another answer

Let us begin with the first question. We shall assume the case is beingaruged by reason in the court of conscience. We ask reason which is the right course to adopt in matters of convitional principle. Independent investigation or Taqlid? Before .considering reason's reply we must interpret Taqlid more closely

?What Is Taqlid

Taqlid consists of accepting the theories and judegements f another person or persons without demanding proof, "without considering or thinking." As the al-Munjid, .a celebrated medieval Arabic dictionary pits it

Based on this definition the question is whether reason permits a person to accept other people's theories in convictional matters without

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Taqlid has no exact equivalent in the European languages, literally it means - ۱ "Imitation" or "mimic" but in Islamic usage it denotes accepting the opinion of a religious leader on faith without independent investigation. As we shall see, it applies only to the more complex questions of ideology, not to fundamental principles. The English expressions "to take as gospel" and "to accept on faith" partly convey the .sense of Taqlid

demanding proof, or not? Does it, in other words, demand that a person should

acquire his beliefs through investigation, and accept other people's theories only after ?the investigation has taken place and on the basis of rational proof

The Rational View Of Taqlid

Keeping in mind our definition of Taqlid we see that reason unquestionably forbids a person from acquiring his beliefs through Taqlid because in matters of basic principles .science(١) is and Taqlid is not conducive to science

And yet the necssity of science in matters of convictions is beyond question, and since belief is the basis of action, and reason most definitely does not permit one to base his individual and social actions on beliefs without personally confirming their validity and .agrreement with reality

Now it is obvious that Taqlid is not conducive to science, since if it were, all schools of thought, all beliefs and religions,whether existing now or hitherto, would be .scientifically correct and in accordancewith reality

!Taqlid, Fictitious Knowledge

Taqlid is indeed not conducive to science, and a muqallid(٢), when all is said and done, thinks that he is a learned man, but he is learned only in the world of his imagination, not the real world. In other words, he is a person of imaginary knowledge not a man .of learning

The followers of every religion think of their own beliefs as correct and free of error, and that only their own beliefs are sound and in accordance with reality, and call them ("scientific" and "certain".(٣

If the followers of every religion allowed themselves to think about their

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١ - The Arabic-Persian world for "science", ilm or elm', is more comprehesive' than its European equivalent, and covers all aspects of knowledge, pure and applied,

.theoretical and empirical

.One who practices Taqlid, follower of a particular religious leader -٢

.”See chapter four “The correction of Belief -٣

beliefs, and remove the veils hiding true knowledge and investigate rather than take on a blind trust, differences between various schools of thought would disappear from human, society, and everyone would arrive at a single common nation and a single religion. Since differences occur only when fictitious knowledge takes the place of true knowing where true scienec reigns there is no room for differenceof .divergence

Taqlid in Belief, The Islamic View

Now that the rational view of Taqlid is convictional matters has been expounded let us see what Islam has to say on the subject. Does Islam, like reason,condemn Taqlid ?orpermit it

First of all we must state that in general Islamic beliefs are divided into two categories, principles (primary beliefs) and subsidiaries (secondary beliefs), which we .may also term basic and non-basic beliefs

The principles of Islamic belief (Usul al-din)(١) consist of the articles of faith which forms the infrastructure of questions of Islamic jurisprudence, politics, mortality, society, economics and culture, such as Tawhid (monotheism), Nubuwwah (belief in prophethood), mo’ad (resurrection of the dead), ‘adl (divine justice) and Imamah .((belief in the imamte

Susidary or non-basic beliefs (foru’ al-din) consist of the ordinaries which Islam has decreed to regulate the relationships between man and God, and man and his fellows, such as prayer, fasting, khoms (Islamic system if tithes), zakat (almsgiving), hajj .(pilgrimage to Mecca) ane the like

In the Islamic view, with respect to non-beliefs Taqlid is not only permitted but obligatory. The authority for Taqlid in non-basic beliefs is secifically vested in the ,Prophet Muhammad or the Imams

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۱- One of the problems facing the translator of Islamic texts written in Persian is the Transliretion of the specialized terminolog which is usuall Arabic in origin. This is normall transliterated according to the Arabic pronounciation, but the transator has as a rule chose to reflect the pronounciation current in Iran today, this osul al-din not usul ed-din, Imamah not imamat and so on. However, in the case of Arabic proper names particularly those of author a simplified form of the usual Arabic transcription .has been preferred

and in their absence, for those who do not have the specialized knowledgeto solve Islamic problems for the words of the Prophet or the Imams in a Mujtahid al-jame'ol-sharayet.(۱)

What we are concerned here with is position of Islam on Taqlid regarding basic beliefs;whether Islam, like reason, rejects Taqlid absolutely in matter of principle, or permits it. In other words, in the Islamic view, ought people to investigate convitional .peinciples personally or practise Taqlid in this respect

As everyone who is familiar with the Quran and other Islamic texts well knows, Islam clearly and explicitly rejects Taqlid in matters of basic principles and insists emphatically that people should investigate matter of belief personally and not adopt .any opinion without due consideration and rational proof

In the Quranic view, the creator has never required mankind to accept his word alone, for example, regarding His own existence or the mission of his prophets, as an article of blind faith, without any rational proof. To substantiate His existence and the truth of the prophetic missions, God justifies on rational ground and invites man to let his .reason be the judge

No prophet has ever urged his flock to follow him blindly in matters of basic belief or to accept his word unquestionably as God's representative. In proving the genuineness of his mission every prophet has relied on rational proof, and asked his followers to let their reason decide and by the same token has requested his adversaries to prove

their claims, telling them in the words of

A mojtahid is one who practices ijtehad, defined as exegesis of Islamic law. A - ۱ mujtahid is this one qualified to give rulings on points of religiois jurisprudence, particularly according to the Shi'a rite. A mojtahid who is jame 'osh-sharayet' possesses all the necessary qualifications for the exercise of spritual authority, in other words he is an Islamic Jurispridеnt. This matter is discussed more full at the end .of the chapter

:the Quran

(Show us your proof"(۱"

Today, no Mujtahid or Islamic theologian permits Taqlid in matters of fundamental belief. Instead, such scholar exhort people to study the basis of their convictions for .themselves

In order to clarify the precise Islam;s view of Taqlid in matters of fundamental belief .we must now examine a number of Quranic verses and hadith(۲) on this subject

Taqlid: The Quranic View

The Quran, in numerous verses strongly condemns Taqlid in matters of basic belief, and explicitly states that until a person has acquired conclusive knowledge and awareness of a particular theory or opinion he is not entitled to adopt it or base his :individual or colleactive life on it. Thus

.(Do not follow that which you have no knowledge of" (۱۷:۳۶"

This Quranic verse counseld one to follow the explicit dictates of the mind. It says, in effect, "O man hear to what your conscience and mind clearly tell you, and in matters of doctrine do not follow others blindly. Do not take a belief as a crterion for your ".actions or adopt it until you are quite sure it is correct

:Another verse states

The most evil of beasts in God’s sight are the deaf, dumb, those who do not reason.”“ .((۸:۲۲

The wounds ‘deaf’ and ‘dumb’ here refer not to persons without the sense of physical hearing or the power of speech but to those who do not use their minds, the ones who ,do not think properly about matters to belief. Of such persons another verse tells us

They have “

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۱- ۲:۱۱۱; ۲۱:۲۴; ۲۷:۶۴

۲- A hadith is a report of words spoken by the prophet for one of the Imams on a specific subject. There are many collections of such sayings running to tens of thousands in all, with varing degrees of authentocity. The are often referred to as .Traditions

.(hearts, but do not comprehend; eyes, but do not see; ears, but do not hear.” (۷:۱۷۹

In other words, they are people who do not use their eyes, or their ears, or their tongues follow in the path of others, adopting other people’s opinions without proof, .instead of using their own minds and thoughts

The Quran thus unlinks the chains created by blind imitation of other, and frees man from such fetters of thought. Every individual is granted the independence of thought and permitted expression of ideas. By freeing man from the tyranny of Taqlid in .convictional matters the Quran thus exhorts him to investigate and contemplate

This leads us an extremely important and sensitive point. The Quran strives to eardicate the credence of knowledgeability from people’s minds and make them truly knowledgeable. The Quran wants to cure the followers of every school of thought and those with all kinds of beliefs of the disease of this credence which is the product of blind acceptance of the beliefs of others, and to lead them to true knowledge and

knowledgeability(۱). It therefore strongly condemns those, who prefer Taqlid and .allow traditional beliefs to prevent them from seeking truth

:The Quran has numerous verse on this subject, two of which we will examine here

When they are told: "Come to what God has revealed, and to His prophet" they say:' ("What we have inherited from our fathers is enough for us".... (۵:۱۰۴

In other words, when people of traditional beliefs who have always followed blindly the customers

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?'This point will be discussed further in chapter four: 'The correction of Belief -۱

and beliefs of their ancestors, tribe or clan are urges to examine the words of God and His Prophet it is as if they were told, "look, you've heard everyone else why don't you hear, what we have to say and when you've digested it use your intellects to decide which of all these is correct? If you decide that God and His Prophet are telling the truth, accept what they say and act accordingly, and if you decide that your parents and the traditions of your tribe or clan or ideals of your party or organizationare right ".then follow them

In reply to this logical argument they say: "No, we don't need to hear the word of God and His Prophet.The traditional beliefs we've inherited from our ancestors are quite enough for us". The Quran then goes on the reply to them with a clear reference to :rule of reason, by saying

Even though their fathers knew nothing and had received no proper guidance."...." .((۵:۱۰۴

Is their attitude logical? Can reason accept their view simply because their parents held certain beliefs not based on logic and understanding they should follow them (blindly and close their eyes and ears as they tread the same path!!"(۱

Taqlid in Belief According To The Hadith

In the language of the HAdith a person who has no views of his own and accepts the views of others based on no investigation but on Taqlid, is called a floater. In the al-Nahaiyeh, a respected collection of Hadith, the Prophet Muhammad is quoted as

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۱- A selection of other Quranic verse with similar content includes.

saying: 'Wake up in the morning as a scholar or as a student, but do not be a 'floater", Ibn Athir commenting in the word"imma'ah" used in this hadith says: "The word imma'ah is applied to a person who has no views or opinions of his own and therefore follows anyone with an opinion. The form imma'a also occurs."(۱)

In other words, ther term imma'a is used in Arabic to indicate someone holding no independent thought, who does not dare tothink and express an opinion. His eyes and ears are always glued to others and to what they must have to say. He waits to see what the party's ideologue says, what the head of his organization thinks, or how public at large reacts to a given situation. A floaters is one who never questions what others say or write.

In this Hadith, the prophet is telling people that in matters of doctrine, they should either be learned or at least try to acquire learning, but in no account they should follow blindly what others believe. From this we may deduce that from the Islamic viewpoint a person should either know that his beliefs are correct and in accordance with reality or else he should strive to acquire such knowledge. But on no account may he be a floater and merely follow the beliefs and views of others.

In this connection, we may quote some verses ascribed to Imam Ali:according to one tradition.

"When I am faced with something I don't know I seek

.'Ibn Athi, Al-Nahaiyeh Vol , is here translated as 'floaters -۱

the truth: I seek it high and low, I'm not a floater, who can never chose, and everywhere he goes asks, "What's the news?" I use analogy and knowledge vast, and often read the future in the past."(۱)

So the true followers of the path of Islam and the real disciplines of the prophet and Imam Ali are those who form their own opnions on matters of faith personally and do not blindly accept the views of this or that. They do not adopt the prevailing view just to avoid being laughed at. The only opnions and beliefs they accept are those that they find to be true after careful consideration, even though the general public may hold the opposite views. They take the path that they find to be true after a thorough study, and they do only what they consider logical, human and wise, which comes as a result of much thought.

Another hadith reported in Tarmadhi's Sahih and related by Hudhdhifa, tells us how the prophet told, his companions 'not to be floaters' and then expounded it in these words: 'Don't be like those people who say: "If others do good, I'll do good, and if others do evil, I'll do evil." Instead be prepared to do good if otheres do good, but if they do evil don't follow them by doing so".(۲)

Imam Sadeq the sixth Imam, is also reported to have told his disciplines 'not to be floaters' and further explained it by saying: 'A floater is someone

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Mizan al-Hikma Hadith No. ۱۶۷۸۳ -۱

.Mizan, Hadith No, ۱۶۷۸۰ -۲

who says: "I'm with the people and I'm just like one of the people".(۱)

What he meant was that in matters of belief and action one should not follow others unquestionably. Regarding what others say and do we should always think if their words and deeds are right or wrong. Do not say I'm with the people and I'm just like

".one of the people, so I'll say whatever they say and do whatever they so

In another Hadith, Imam Kazem, the seventh Imam, is reported as telling to one of his followers, a man certain Fadhl bin Yunis: "Do good and speak good and do not be a floater". Fadhl bin Younis tells us that he asked the Imam what he meant by this and the reply came: 'Do not say: "I'm with the people and I'm just one of the people". The Imam when on the quote ahadith of the prophet, as follows: 'O people, there are two paths to follow, the path of righteousness and the path of evil. You should not be (prefereing the path of evil to the path of righteousness".(۲)

The words of the prophet:verily we have shown them two paths" are an allusion to the Quranic verse "We have shown him the two paths" (۹۰:۱۰), the implication being that man has been created ina way that is capable of telling the difference between right and wrong. The words of the prophet, alluding thus to the word of God, convery a reprimand. He is saying: "When there

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۱- Ibid, Hadith No. ۱۶۷۸۱

۲- Mizan Hadith No. ۲۰۶۰۴. According to another version the prophet said' Why do you .(prefer the path of evil to the path of righteousness?' (Hadith No. ۲۰۶۰۵

are only two paths to choose from why does man forsake the path that reason tells him is correct and choose the path that reason tells him to avoid?" While explaining .what the prophet meant by a 'floater' Imam Kazeem's reasonung makes two points

The first point is that socially what causes a person to choose the path of evil is being a 'floater' and blindly following the opnions and actions of others, and if someda manking manes to free himself from the bondage of Taqlid a great deal of social .problems will be solved

The second point is that man has been created in such a way that is e gets rid of Taqlid he can be a man of independent ideas and choose the path of righteouness. Since reasoning can help man to distinguish between right and wrong. Islam too

(exhorts man to do good and what is just and right and to shun evil and cruelty.(1)

Adopting The Beliefs Of Distinguished Personalities

An important point which strikes us in perusing hadith relating to Taqlid is that in matters of basic belief and articles of faith Taqlid is firmly condemned by the Imam, .even if those beliefs happen to be correct

Thus Imam Sadeq is quoted as saying: A person who is converted to this religion in emulation of a strong personliaty may also leave it for the same reason but if a person accepts it as a result of studying the Quran and the sunna(2) mountains should be (shaken from their seat before he abandons his convictions.(3)

Another

۱- Truly God bid just virtue... fobid prostitution, evil cruelty.
۲- The Sunna, literally 'the path', is the collective actions and sayings of the Prophet.
۳- Mizan, Hadith No. ۶۲۶۹.

version of this hadith is as follows: 'One who learns his religion from the Book of od mountains will be moved before he doubts his faith, wheareas one, who gets involved (in an affair out of ignorance may also leave it through ignorance.'(1)

There are several senitive and valuablepoints to be learned from these hadith: The first point is that following persons of influsence in matters of religious belief is condemned and regarded as undesirable: for a person of reason should acquire his .beliefs through researh and one's own discrenment not thorough Taqlid

The second point is that in the cae of those who embrace Islam as a result of following the beliefs of Islamic personalities, for the reaons that the basisof their conversion is tqlid and emulation of an individual they admire and since their beliefs are not rooted in reason or knowledge of one day their hero decides to abandon Islam they too will change their beliefs in order to follow him therefore. Beliefs based

on Taqlid are always subject to change and decline 'A person who enters this religion in emulation of a strong personality may also leave it for the same reason.'

The third point is that if a person who embrace Islam under the guidance of the Quran and the hadith his religious convictions will be so firmly entrenched in him that they will be stronger than mountains.

In other words mountains may be uprooted from the earth; but the religious beliefs of someone who has found his faith

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۱- Ibid, Hadith No, ۶۲۹۷

in the uran and the Hadith will never be wrenched from his heart.

But if a person enters religion as a result of studying the Quran and Sunna, 'mountains will be moved from their seat before he abandons his beliefs.'

The fourth point is, that the guidance provided by the Quran and the Hadith indicates that a person's beliefs must be founded on reasonable and scientific grounds. If he accepts them on the same basis. "A person who becomes involved in an affair through ignorance may also leave it through ignorance."

The points mentioned by ImamSadeq are confirmed by experience and history. In the last ۱۴۰۰ years of history of Islam we may find many examples of people who embraced this religion through emulation of a powerful personalities and abandoned it for the same reason.

The history of the divinely inspired reslion signifies that following political or religious personalities in matters of beliefs that is the cult of the personality, has caused untold harm to these religions. A study of the hitory of relion from this aspect although of great interst and indeed of instructive value, is nevertherless beyond the scope of the present introductory discussion. We shall therefore limit ourselves to two examples of the cult of the personality, one taken from the dawn of Islam, and the other from the

.recent past

The Cult of the Personality in the Dawn of Islam

In the time when Imam Ali was ruling as Caliph many of his contemporaries, together with a number of political and religious personalities of the day, who have become known as

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Nakethin, Qasetin and Mareqin, as a result of infactuation by the personality cult abandonded the true Islam. Infact they formed ranks against it and casued great form to the roots of this young sapling, the bitter effects of which have affected .Islamic society to this day

The Imam was painfully disappointed at how the efforts of the Prophet, himself and the followers of true Islam to establish a government and society worthy of Islam were ending in failure because of the sabotage inflicted by those who had once beein .his commrade-in-arms

What vexed Ali more was the fact the many people did not hestate to think it through to see if what those respected personalities were saying was true or false, or whether the cause of action chosen by them was right or wrong, or whether in claiming to be fighting under the banner of Islam they were really trying to help Islam or they were .just using Islam as a stepping-stone to reach to their personal ambitions

Without a doubt the ‘floaters’ and blind followers of the deviationisfs of ‘Ali’s day caused the Imam greater pain than did the devistaionists themselves, because without these followers they would have accompilshed nothing. In Chapter ۱۴۷ of the Nahj-ol-Balagha ‘Ali is reported as giving a short but profound analysis of the politicial and socil conditions of his community, which can also provide valuable guidance to understanding our society today. This analysis has two special aspects that are .worthy of attention

One aspectis that in order to

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explain the matter to Kumayl one of his senior disciplines, the Imam took him by the hand and led him to the desert, while full of grief,he expounded to him on what was troubling him. The second aspet is that before embarking on his analysis of society as he as he saw it, the Imam drew Kumayl's attention to the capacity of people's hearts,saying some can take a great deal and others more, and the greater one is in .his heart the better

It is obvious that the Imam could not tell about his grief to everybody. To hear his words required a capacity that not everyone had. After all, how he speak of the numbers of true Muslims, those who really understood and were still faithful to Islam? How could he openly say that people with such excellent past, finding their oersonal ?interests threathened, had abandoned Islam

How could he say that many of his contemporaries had been seduced in the name of Islam by the establishments of distinguished figures of society, were not real Muslims at all? Or that they did not understand Islam, and their religion was in pawn to the personalities that they trusted and followed, or that their standards of what was right ?and wrong belonged to those distinguished personlities, not to themselves

In any event, 'Ali began his plaintive analysis for Kumayl who had the heart to hear the social ills of his time. it starts with these words: 'People are of three classes; those who

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know God;those who seek the path of salvation; and those who like foolish flies follow every voice that calls, and go on every direction that wind blows, unenlightened and .have no firm refuge

With these words the Imam divides the people of his community, or perhaps people in general, into three groups: The first group consists of those who have recognized the divine truth, and, whose beliefs and deeds, individual and social attitudes are based

.”on sound standards. The Imam cals them “those who know God

The second group consists of those who may not yet have recognized the divine truth, but are people of contemplation and thought, and are on the path that leads to divine knowledge. If they continue on this path to the end they will be saved from domination. The Imam, therefore, calls such people ‘those who seek the path of .salvation

The third group consists of those who have neither recognized the divine truth nor emarked on the path that leads to divine knowledge which may be called students on the path of salvation. Rather, they are people who have totally failed to think and .’investigate such matters for themselves. The Imam calls such people ‘foolish flies

The Imam compares this third group, who fail to think for themselves, with the flies and feed on him, they are attracted to the sound of every voice that calls out without stopping to think who that person may be and whether what he says is true or false, flies that are

.carried along on every direction that wind blows

The reason why people have become so vulgar and ignorable, in the Imam’s view, is that they have not been illuminated by the light of knowledge and lack of .firmconvitional basis

This categorization by Imam Ali is infact the same as the one that is attributed to the Prophet by Ibn Athir.(۱) The difference being that prophet’s words are in the form of a statement. The prophet says that Muslims must be knowledgeable or seek knowledge but never a ‘floater’, the Imam states Muslims in his day are of three kinds:those who know God, those who seek the path of salvation and those who are .’like ‘foolish flies

The expression of ‘foolish flies’ as used by the Imam, is the same as the ‘floater’ refered to bye the Prophet, namely people, lacking an independent convitional basis,

who merely follow the opnions of others. Such people are the most dangerous enemies of those governing based on truth and justice. What greived Ali so and caused him to sigh to heaven was that his contemporaries were almost without exception, of the third category: ‘floaters’, ‘foolish flies’, those who lacked a firm .conviticonal base, and swayed on that way with every passing breeze

Those who sought the oath of salvation were extremely few in Ali’s day. As his subsequent remarks tells us, such persons are characterized by a refusal to misuse knowledge or betray their faith,possesing sufficient insight to deal with doubts and totally rejecting the lust for materialistic

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(Don’t be a floater’ (see p-above‘ -۱

life. People a speculative nature who are endowed with these characteristics were all .too few in Ali’s day

Even scarer than those who sought the path of salvation were those who had achieved knowledge of the Divine. As the Imam puts it: ‘I swear to God, their number .’is extremely few

We see, then, that Imam Ali was surrounded by a mass of people who were neither‘ persons of discrement nor seekers after the truth, neither persons of knowledge nor seekers after the truth, neither persons of knowledge nor students of knowledge; rather, they were people whose minds and thoughts, knowledge an ideology, and even their fate, were in extricably tied to the fate of the distinguished personalities .they admitted most and were pulled in every direction that they wished

Imam Ali was accompanies by people who did not want to understand, or were incapabe of understanding that the personalities theyadmired were just as fallible as others. They could not understand that Talha and Zobair might also make mistakes, .and that the Holy Men of Nahravan might err

Society was in such a deplorable state that some could not even imagine the possibility that Mu'awiyah(١) might be wrong? At the Battle of the Camel one of 'Ali's supporters, a man named Harith bin hut spoke to the Imam in such terms that show .to what a sad level Muslim thinking had declined

When Harith saw that the leader of opposite side at this battle was none other than Aiysha, the Mother of the Faithful, and

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١- Ummayyad Caliph and Imam "Ali's arch-enem.

that personalities with such a distinguished Islamic background as Talha, and even more distinguished Zobair, who had sought sanctuary in Ali's house during the Saqifa affair,(١) has chosen to fight on her side he simply could not believe that men with such records of distinction could be wrong to fight against Ali. So he approached the :Imam and said

"O Commander of the Faithful, I cannot believe that Talha and Zobair and Ayesha .could unite unless it were for a just cause"

In another version, Harith's words are reported as being. 'Do you expect me to believe that the companions of the Camel were misled?"(٢)

Just imagine, if among the Imam's companions, living as they were in an enviornment full of the light of knowledge and spiritual awareness, individuals were to be found incapable of believeing that personalities with such distinguished records as Talha and Zobair were wrong to be at war with 'Ali what can we expect of other Muslims of ?his da who perhaps had not even seen the Imam

Nevertheless, in reply to Harith, the Imam delivered words which, as Dr. Taha Hussein, the well-known Egptian writer so apthy put it "Were the epitome of firmness words of such greatness as have never been heard since the Revelation fell silent and the Voice of Heaven spoke no more."(٣)

The Imam’s reply was this: ‘You are in grave eror. Truth and falsehood can in no wise be distinguished by the yardstick of personality. Know the truth, you will know who ;follows the truth

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Nahj al-Sa’ada Vol. ١.p. ٢٩٨ -١

.Mizan al-Hikma, Hadith No. ۴١٢۶ -٢

A refernce to the Islamic belief that after the death of the Prophet Muhammad no -٣ .further divine revelations have taken place

(and know falsehood. You will know who follows falsehood.(١

In other words, your mistake, and that of others like you, os that instead of using truth anmd falsehood as criteria to judge personalities b, you have used personalities as a criterion for truth and falsehood. You are attempting to understand the truth b the standards of a personalit, weheras if you permit ourself to think for yourself you will know that the correct course is quite the opposite: a personality, however exalted and trustworth, can never the criterion for truth and falsehood. When a person knows the truth he knows who is the follower of the truth, regardless of the background or status of that follower: and when falsehood is understood the follower of falsehood can easily be identified regardless of their distinguished records or the universal acclaim they may enjoy.or status of that follower: and when falsehood is understood the follower of falsehood can easily be identified regardless of their distinguished .records or the universal acclaim they may enjoy

The Cult of the Personality Today

Taqlid in ideas and the cult of the personality have continued throughout the course of history. and the changes that have occurred are largely superficial. The main difference is in the form that Taqlid takes and the personality that is followed, not in the underlying principle. takes and the personality that is followed, not in the .underlying principle

At one time the cult-figures in matters of belief were their ancestors(۲) or their tribal ,chiefs and kings(۳) once the. Were leading religious authorities(۴). Today

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۱- Mizan, Chapter ۸۹۸

۲- They say: "This was what our fathers practiced and we are only following in their foot Steps" (۴۳:۲۲)

۳- On the day of Judgment) 'The depraved masses will say to those who held away over them "Had we not followed you we might have been believers." (۳۴:۳۱).

۴- They (Jews and Christians) worship their rabbis and monk. and the Messiah." Mary's Son, as Gods besides Allah" (۹.۳۱).

in its modern form the leaders of political parties and organizations are followed the organizational and non-organizational supporters of these leaders are called 'floaters'. Whose eyes and ears are closed and who do not permit themselves to think for themselves and have no doubts about the soundness., of the beliefs. actions. views and official instructions of the authorities they follow.. Today, in its modern form the leaders of political parties and organizations are followed the organizational and non-organizational supporters of these leaders are called 'floaters'. Whose eyes and ears are closed and who do not permit themselves to think for themselves and have no doubts about the soundness., of the beliefs. actions. views and official instructions .of the authorities they follow

The difficulties posed to the Islamic Republic of Iran by the organizations. parties and individuals opposed to it or are in armed conflict with are almost practically those which Imam 'Ali was confronted with by his opponents. The problem facing his government was the simple-minded or foolish followers who did not bother to evaluate the beliefs and actions of the personalities they admired." The problem for the Islamic Republic. although nothing like so extensive since a decisive majority Of the Muslim people of Iran enjoy considerable intellectual maturity. is that within the confines of the opponents of the Islamic Republic and those groups in armed conflict with it are simple minded and ignorant supporters of these groups. whose infatuation

with the personality-cult prevents them from appreciating reality.minded and ignorant supporters

of these groups. whose infatuation with the personality-cult prevents them from appreciating reality.

The main factor responsible for the deviation of these simple-hearted supporters from the straight path of the Revolution and Islam, which has led them into the trap of these groups, is this disease- the cult of the personality. Their deviationism is due to the fact that their revolutionary beliefs are based on personality and not discernment, and the positions they have adopted are the result of Taqlid and not the quest for truth. and not the quest for truth.

Thus it was that when their ideologues deserted the true path of the Islamic Revolution and joined forces with its enemies they followed their leadership unquestioningly. Matters came to such a sorry pass those, who had once denounced imperialism with such vehemence shamelessly embraced the forces of imperialism and Zionism.embraced the forces of imperialism and Zionism.

Even more shameless were the illicit sexaul relations of the leadership in the name of an ideological revolution! This has been presented as a model to these blind followers, the "floaters" and "flies", but they cannot understand that such deeds whatever they are, are certainly not revolutionary! And if that type of relationships are revolutionary they are certainly not an ideological revolution!and "flies", but they cannot understand that such deeds whatever they are, are certainly not revolutionary! And if that type of relationships are revolutionary they are certainly not an ideological revolution!

Advice Of Imam Sadeq

Imam Sadeq, the Sixth Imam advised one of his followers, a certain Thamali. in

:these terms: a certain Thamali. in these terms

"!"!Be aware not to seek high positions and do not follow, great men blindly'

It means that in life we should avoid two common habits: the pursuit of power and the cult of the personality. In society we should try to be neither in the vanguard nor the rearguard neither a leader nor the led!to be neither in the vanguard nor the rearguard !neither a leader nor the led

Thamali failed to understand what the Imam meant assumed that he was denouncing the position of leadership in general. For if there is no-one in the vanguard or the rearguard of society, the leadership, even of divinely-appointed leaders is likewise, automatically denied, and teaching and learning arc pointless also for it implies that the pupil will not follow the teacher and teacher will not undergo the stages required :for his position. So Thamali replied:So Thamali replied

May I sacrifice myself for you! I understand what you say about the evils of seeking' power and position, but I don't understand a hat you mean by not following great men. After all. two thirds of whatever knowledge and learning I have is the result of following great men. If I hadn't followed you and people like you, I wouldn't have any knowledge worth mentioning. So why should I avoid following great men.' The Imam replied: "It is not as you have supposed. Because lest you choose a person as your leader and accept whatever he tells you without any

(reason.(۱

The Imam is saying that: "What I meant by following the great man is that you should not choose someone as your leader without the confirmating of your mind and without proper proof and accept everything that he tells. You unquestioningly, or blindly submit yourself". [-however great his personality-].. [-however great his .[-personality

What an ugly sight it is indeed to see a person who will not think for himself and has

put his mind at the disposal of another and allowed himself to be led wherever that person chooses! And how regrettable it is that whenever a person pushes himself to the fore there are people who will follow him blindly and act as his disciples!how regrettable it is that whenever a person pushes himself to the fore there are people !who will follow him blindly and act as his disciples

Taqlid In Secondary Or Non–Basic Matters

It has by now been clearly established that both from the intellectual point of view and according to the Quran and Hadith Taqlid in matters of convictional principles is a practice to be condemned. Here the question may arise: what about Taqlid in non-basic matters" Is Taqlid in such matters, as in the case of basic or fundamental ??religious principles, to be avoided or is these a difference between the two cases

The answer is that Taqlid in such non-basic matters is not only correct but mandatory. for those who arc not experts in religious jurisprudence and incapable of taking the appropriate action as required by religious beliefs without referring to

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.Mizan. Hadith No. ۱۶۷۸۴ -۱

such experts. Another question that may be posed is: Why is Taqlid in basic matters of religion rejected by both the purely intellectual and the theological stand point, yet in nonbasic matters it is held to be mandatory? in basic matters of religion rejected by both the purely intellectual and the theological stand point, yet in nonbasic matters it ?is held to be mandatory

In other words, if the explicit dictates of reason. Hadith and the Quran are that a person should not accept the opinion of others without knowledge and science and awareness, and if because it is not conducive to science then Taqlid in basic matters of belief is not permissible, why should it be correct and even mandatory in non-basic matters?why should it be correct and even mandatory in non-basic matters?

Again, if Taqlid is not conducive to science, this must be so both for basic and non-

basic matters alike; but why is it held that in basic matters of belief it is not correct yet in non-basic matters it is? And finally, why is reference made to the intellect and reason in matters of basic belief while this is not the case in non-basic matters? And finally, why is reference made to the intellect and reason in matters of basic belief ?while this is not the case in non-basic matters

Taqlid In Non–Basic Matters Is A Reference To Reason

There are both a brief and a long and detailed answers to these questions: The brief answer is that Taqlid in non-basic matters as well is in

fact resorting to one's reason. For an explanation and to provide a detailed answer, consider the following analogy: Imagine you are ill or one of your family is ill, and you want to consult a doctor. What does reason tell you to do? and you want to consult a ?doctor. What does reason tell you to do

When it comes to finding a doctor, who is a specialist in the disease in question and one you can place your confidence in, reason tells you that you can find him by consulting reliable acquaintances who know about such matters and in this way get the name of the most experienced specialized and reliable doctor available. When it comes to finding a doctor, who is a specialist in the disease in question and one you can place your confidence in, reason tells you that you can find him by consulting reliable acquaintances who know about such matters and in this way get the name of .the most experienced specialized and reliable doctor available

But once you have his name and have consulted him and he has carried out his examination and given you a prescription reason does not tell you to ask him what the basic for his diagnosis is or why he has prescribed this part particular treatment. On the contrary, reason tells you that since you are not a medical specialist yourself you should take whatever prescription he has given you and follow the course of treatment prescribed. Following the doctor's

..prescription is a form of Taqlid

Just as reason has told you to enquire as to who is the most suitable factor it also tells you that when it comes to an acting on the course of treatment prescribed by the doctor Taqlid is mandatory. is mandatory.

Making enquiries on matters of non-basic belief is the same as finding the right doctor, and it is what reason tells you to do: it does not tell you to accept the opinion of others and act on them without making through enquiries to find the right consultant. Taqlid in non-basic matters, just like following the treatment prescribed by the doctor, takes place after finding the right consultant and being convinced of his expertise and putting your trust in him. in non-basic matters, just like following the treatment prescribed by the doctor, takes place after finding the right consultant and being convinced of his expertise and putting your trust in him.

And justas Taqlid with respect to medical consultant, that is following his advice and the course of treatment he prescribes, is not contrary to reason. On the contrary in following the dictates of reason, so too Taqlid in matters of non-basic belief with respect to a mojtahid having all the necessary qualifications, who is a specialist in religious matters, is in fact consulting one's reason following its dictates.necessary qualifications, who is a specialist in religious matters, is in fact consulting one's reason following its dictates.

Chapter ۳: Research in Ideology

point

In previous discussions we have

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while proving that Taqlid in fundamental beliefs is wrong from the points of view of reason and Islam. and at the same time we proved the necessity for earring out investigation and research into such matters. In this chapter the importance that Islam ascribe to research including research into Islam itself and the view that

persons engaged in this task cannot be called infidels. will also be examined. Three main aspects of research will therefore be looked at: a) the Islamic view, b) the relationship between science and faith, c) the relationship between ignorance and (kufr. (۱)

The Islamic View Of Research

In order to establish what the Islamic view is of the importance of research and investigation into convectional matters we must first study such terms as 'Ilm (science) 'aql (reason) m'arafat (knowledge), fikr (thought), Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) Hikmah (wisdom, tadabbor (foresight) tazakkor (reminding), tabyin .(explanation) and ro'yat (observation) in the Quran and the hadith.hadith

Such a study conclusively proves that no school of thought attaches such importance to research into the foundations of belief and investigation of the truth or to the eradication of obstacles as well as the creation of circumstances conducive to this end as docs Islam.(۲)۳۹

With astonishing insistence Islam invites people to investigate and think for themselves about their fundamental beliefs. The extent to which Islam appreciates the importance of science and knowledge is well illustrated by numerous hadith such as: 'Science is the highest attainment.(۳) 'the veil of calamity.'(۴) 'the most valuable of treasures.(۵) 'the basis of all goodness.(۶) the soul

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۱- Kufr is a comprehensive Islamic term that includes blasphemy'. Disbelief, atheism and the like and has no exact equivalent in the European languages. A person practicing kufr is a Kafir. i.e. an infidel, unbeliever, atheist and so on. The author gives (a more deviled definition of this concept later in this chapter (IV

۲- This point is discussed more hilly in the second and third parts of understanding (pp (- --to

۳- Mizan Hadith No.۱۳۳۳۰

۴- .Ibid. No.۱۳۳۳۸

.Ibid No. ۱۳۳۵۲ -۵

.Ibid. Chapter ۲۸۳۲ -۶

of the self.(۱) 'man is judged by the extent of his knowledge.(۲) 'it is incumbent on every Muslim, both male and female, to seek knowledge in all circumstances.(۳) 'those who seek knowledge are closest to the rank of prophet hood.(۴) 'the angels place their wings beneath their feet.(۵) 'forgiveness is implored for the student'.(۶) 'paradise seeks the student."(۷) scholar is heir to the prophets.(۸) 'the scholar's pen is mightier than the blood of martyrs.(۹) regard for scholars is an act of worship';(۱۰) Islam ascribes dozens, perhaps hundreds, of other virtues to knowledge. studying and scholarship, and all this respect is to encourage people to study, so that by the aid of knowledge they can be freed from the tyranny of Taqlid, and base their beliefs and actions on reasonable and scientific standards., and base their beliefs and actions on .reasonable and scientific standards

In the Islamic view, even the slightest indications of a person's intentions should be carefully weighed and coordinated in accordance with reason. Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, gave his disciple Kumayl the following advice: 'O Kumayl, in everything you do there is a need for knowledge.(۱۱)۵۴

In other words Islam does not permit a person to perform an action without prior investigation and assurance that it is correct. If he does so. not only is he not free from fault, but such an action is itself a grave error. Islam thus endeavor to persuade people that before embarking on any action they should carry out an investigation and

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.Ibid. Chapter ۲۸۳۳ -۱

.Ibid. Chapter ۲۸۳۶ -۲

.Ibid. Chapter ۲۸۶۴ and ۲۸۴۷ -۳

.Ibid. Chapter ۲۸۳۷ -۴

.Ibid. Chapter ۲۸۵I -۵

.Ibid. Chapter ۲۸۵۳ -۶

.Ibid. Chapter ۲۸۵۲ -۷

.Ibid Chapter ۲۸۳۸ -۸

.Ibid. Chapter ۲۸۳۹ -۹

.Ibid. Chapter ۲۸۴۵ -۱۰

Ibid. Hadith No ۷۴۲۱ -۱۱

acquire the requisite knowledge, and considers the ideal Muslim to be one whose cognition and knowledge, not acts of worship. exceed those of others. The Prophet Muhammad is reported as saying: 'The best of you in terms of faith is the person among you with the greatest knowledge.(۱)۵۵

Another version of this hadith describes the ideal Muslim in these words: 'Some of you are superior to others in prayer, some in pilgrimage, some in almsgiving, some in fasting, but the best of all of you is the person who is superior in terms of knowledge.(۲) This is why Imam Baqer, the Fifth Imam. advising his successor Imam Sadeq says: 'My son, Know the real value of our followers by the extent of their knowledge of the traditions for verily knowledge is understanding the traditions.'My son, Know the real value of our followers by the extent of their knowledge of the traditions for verily knowledge is understanding the traditions.

By traditions the Imam meant the words of the Prophet and the Imams and by knowing the traditions he meant research and investigation and expounding on the real meaning of these sayings.By traditions the Imam meant the words of the Prophet and the Imams and by knowing the traditions he meant research and investigation and expounding on the real meaning of these sayings.

In other words. he is referring to the preservation and transmission of hadith, 'knowledge' of the traditions is jurisprudent (faqih) the science of hadith a jurisprudent (faqih) is one who

bid. hadith No ۱۸۷۳ -۱

.Ibid. No. ١١٨٧٣ -٢

.has studied and understands the hadith.hadith

In this hadith, Imam Baqer first advises his son to judge the Shi'a and followers of the Prophet's Household by the criterion of their knowledge, that is understanding of hadith. He then goes on to say': It is understanding of the hadith that ralses a believer to the highest levels of faith'. In other words. what 'really matters is a deep understanding of the hadith and a more knowledge of many hadith without fully Understanding them is of little value. without fully Understanding them is of little .value

Continuing. the Imam quotes a hadith of Imam Ali. He says: 'I was studying the book of Ali and in it I came across this sentence:' "The value of every person is the extent of his understanding".(١) On another occasion Imam Sadeq has this to say on the importance of understanding hadith: 'One hadith that you understand is worth a thousand that you merely relate'. that you understand is worth a thousand that you .'merely relate

Narating a hadith may be useful.(٢) and instructive for those to whom it is related, but for the narrator a hadith is only useful if he understands it, otherwise as Imam Baqer says. he derives little advantage from his knowledge. In fact. sometimes it may even be harmful both for the narrator and his audience alike, since when the narrator is not knowledgeable about hadith more often this may cause hadith to be distorted. to be .distorted

This is the reason for the commander

Mu'ani al-akhbar. p. ٢ -١

Mizan.hadith No٣٣٥١ -٢

of the Faithful words: 'Understanding of hadith is incumbent upon you, not narrating

them'.(۱) And on another occasion Imam Ali is quoted as saying: 'The ignorant devoute their efforts to narrating traditions. but the wise to understanding them.'(۲) In these hadith and other similar ones.(۳) There are two points to be noted: The first is that Islam attaches the utmost importance to research and understanding of the truth and .the avoidance of Taqlid in ideological matters. in ideological matters

It is a religion that stresses the need for a full understanding of its precepts, and not its ill-understood and unconsidered transmission. In other words faith must be based on knowledge and understanding not blind devoutness.It is a religion that stresses the need for a full understanding of its precepts, and not its ill-understood and unconsidered transmission. In other words faith must be based on knowledge and .understanding not blind devoutness

The second point is the confidence shown by the leaders of Islam that this religion is fully compatible with the most stringent scientific and rational standards, to the extent that scholars, if they are fair-minded, they will conclude that Islam is the true religion: otherwise why would so much emphasis be placed on study and research?placed on ?study and research

The Relationship Between Science And Faith

For scholars, the native of the relationship between science and faith, in the Islamic view, is indeed an interesting question. Pseudo-intellectuals who lack religious-faith and are opposed to religious beliefs claim that there is no link between science and faith, and that in

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Miran. Hadith No. ۳۳۵۵ -۱

.Ibid Hadith No. ۳۳۵۶ -۲

.Ibid. Chapter ۷۱۹ -۳

principle religious convictions are opposed to science and vice versa. They therefore. think that in every society where science flourishes there is no room for religion, and

wherever religion flourishes there can be no room for science to grow and develop.for .science to grow and develop

Let us see what Islam has to say on this subject.Let us see what Islam has to say on .this subject

In the Islamic view, there is an inseparable link between science and faith: faith is seen in principle, as the fruit of science, the scientist is a true believer, and a lack of faith stems from ignorance! See how profoundly and beautifully the Quran expounds this truth: ignorance! See how profoundly and beautifully the Quran expounds this :truth

Those to whom knowledge has been given can clearly see that what your lord has' revealed to you is the truth.' (۳۴:۶).'Those to whom knowledge has been given can .(clearly see that what your lord has revealed to you is the truth.' (۳۴:۶

So that those to whom knowledge has been given may know that this Quran is the ...' .(truth revealed by your Lord and thus believe in it.' (۲۲:۵۴

We may note that these verses clearly and explicitly state that there is a relationship and inseparable link between science and faith, and that scholars and scientists undoubtedly understand the truth of Islam. In other words, when ignorance is eradicated from human society) Islam will embrace the whole world because it is a scientific and logical religion

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with rational standards.world because it is a scientific and logical religion with rational .standards

In other words, these verses teach us that a person cannot be a scientist or have reached- a state of true knowledge and understanding without being a firm believer in Islam. To be sure, the possibility exists that. a person may think of himself as a scientist and having acquired an understanding of the truth, yet not be a believer. Pseudo-science certainly is compatible with a lack of faith, but real science is

necessarily accompanied by faith, since science and faith, as these two verses tell us, are inseparable. In the Islamic view, science and faith are like a pair of Seamese .twins, born together and die together

Now see what a beautiful expression Imam; 'Ali has left us. inspired by the Quran'.Now see what a beautiful expression Imam; 'Ali has left us. inspired by the .'Quran

Faith and science are like twin brothers or inseparable companions.’(۱)۶۲'

Ali is saying in other words that just as if a person comes across one of a pair of' Seamese twins or a pair of inseparable companions he really has visited and recognized the other. If a person reaches a high degree of knowledge he will also have reached a high degree of faith. and if a person acquires faith. he will also hate attained knowledge and understanding of the truth.degree of knowledge he will also have reached a high degree of faith. and if a person acquires faith. he will also hate

p: ۴۶

.Mizan. Hadith No. ۱۹۴۵۷ -۱

.attained knowledge and understanding of the truth

In this connection an interesting hadith of the prophet has been recorded that explains the link between science and faith in a different way: 'Knowledge is the very life-force of Islam and the pillar of faith.(۱)۶۳

This hadith compares the link between science and faith to two things: the relationship between body and soul, and that of between a pillar and the ceiling it supports.This hadith compares the link between science and faith to two things: the relationship between body and soul, and that of between a pillar and the ceiling it .supports

If a body lacks life or soul it is incapable of movement or growth. and a ceiling without a pillar to support it cannot remain in its position for a single moment. Islam likewise

has such inseparable links with science and knowledge: bon from and approved by knowledge, Islam can' only thrive and develop in a scientific environment.scientific .environment

?Which Science

Here is two important questions presents themselves: Which science is twinned with faith? Which branch of learning is the vital force of faith and the pillar of its support?
?branch of learning is the vital force of faith and the pillar of its support

The brief answer to these questions is this: the science which is inseparable from faith consists of a specific world view that presents the universe to man as it is, and gives all branches of science and knowledge their direction. validity and worth.presents the universe to man as it is, and gives all

p: ۴۷

.Ibid. Hadith No. ۱۹۴۵۶ -۱

.branches of science and knowledge their direction. validity and worth

This brief answer will be more fully explained in the discussion of the Nobovat khasa (proper prophet hood) in a later chapter, accompanied by a commentary on the Quranic verses quoted at the start of this section. ۱-The relationship between ignorance and Kufr

Next we will discuss the third aspect of our present topic, namely the relationship between ignorance and Kufr. Is the relationship between ignorance and kufr the same as that between science and faith. and is every: kafir an ignorant? Or do ignorance and kufr have a different mutual relationship? have a different mutual ?relationship

The faith of the matter is that the relationship between ignorance and Kufr is not like that between science and faith. i.e. ignorance and Kufr are not linked or twinned inseparably together. since it is possible for someone to be ignorant without being a

Kafir and it is also possible for a person to be a Kafir without being ignorant. without .being ignorant

To explain this brief statement more fully two introductory discussions are necessary: first what do we mean by Kufr and Kafir? and second, what are the practical positions a person can adopt in relation to facts which are either known or unknown to him?? and second, what are the practical positions a person can adopt in relation to facts ?which are either known or unknown to him

The Meaning Of Kufr And Kafir

The original sense of Kufr is that of concealing, and a person who concealing something, or a thing

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which conceals something else, is termed a Kafir. Concealment is of two kinds literal and metaphorical putting a seed in the ground is an example of the first kind and hiding the truth by means of falsehood or vice versa, is an example of the second kind.(۱)۶۴

So if a person states something which is contrary to his knowledge and belief his ..action is a form of Kufr and he himself is termed a Kafir

Someone who knows the truth and claims not to know it, is a Kafir, and so is someone who does not know the truth, but claims to do so. since the first person is concealing his knowledge and the second his ignorance: whereas someone who does not know the truth and admits that he does not, is not a Kafir but merely ignorant.but merely .ignorant

Positions Be Adopted In Factuals

When confronted with facts that are either known or unknown to him a person can in :practice adopt one of four position:one of four position

(he may know the truth and state that he knows it.(۲ (۱

.he may know the truth and state that he does not know it (۲

he may not know the truth and state that he does not know it or state nothing at (۳ all.۳) he may not know the truth and state that he does not know it or state nothing at .all

he may not know the truth and state that he does know it.۴) he may not know the (۴ .truth and state that he does know it

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A more complete definition of Kufr is contained in a later section of this book 'bars -۱ .'to Understanding
.It alludes to devotees -۲

person who knows the truth and states that he knows it, is a person of knowledge and faith. A person who knows the truth and states that he does not know it is a person of knowledge and a kafir because he is concealing his knowledge. A person who does not know the truth yet claims to do so is a person of ignorance and a kafir. And finally a person who does not know the truth and does not claim to do so is ignorant but not ..a kafir

In his attitude towards the truths of existence a person may therefore be knowledgeable and a believer, knowledgeable and a kafir, ignorant and a kafir or ..ignorant but not a kafir

Form these explanations it is obvious that in the case of ignorance and kufr there is no such link as that between knowledge and faith. In the language of the logicians between ignorance and kufr, there is a relationship known as partial overlapping i.e. a person may be a kafir but not ignorant, or he may be ignorant but not a kafir. or he ..may be both ignorant and a kafir

The Kafir Who Is Not Ignorant

A person who denies something he knows to be true is a kafir. but he is not ignorant, since he is aware of the truth. It is like someone who is fully aware of the existence of God but for some private reason denies this in his public utterances or in the Imam 'Ali's expression. `His heart confesses while his tongue

denies.(۱)۶۶

This category includes such people as Pharaoh and his followers. According to the Quran. despite the fact that Moses had provided clear proofs of the existence of the Creator of the Universe and his own prophetic mission. the truth of which they fully realized. they were unable to acknowledge this truth because of their egotistical, ambitious, cruel and criminal character, which caused them to denounce Moses and :deny God. As the Quran tells it:As the Quran tells it

In their wickedness and pride (Pharaoh and his followers) denied (God's undoubted` signs), although their souls knew them to be true.' (۲۷:۱۴).their souls knew them to be .(true.' (۲۷:۱۴

As a result of the clear proofs and powerful logic that Moses gave them. and the miracles he performed in their presence, they were convinced that Moses was telling the truth and that the God of whom he spoke. whose prophet be claimed to be and who' summoned the people to worship, was the creator of the world and all therein. But despite this inner certainty they denied the signs of God, denounced Moses, and called his God a fable. Why did they do this?the creator of the world and all therein. But despite this inner certainty they denied the signs of God, denounced Moses, and ?called his God a fable. Why did they do this

The Quran provides us with the answer. The reason for this denial was their wickedness and the desire to be superior. They knew that if they acknowledged the truth

.Mizan, Hadith No. ۴۰۹۳ -۱

of Moses and the God of whom Moses claimed to be the prophet they would have to put an end to their wickedness and wrong-doing, and their pride and ambition. And since they were loath to do so they concealed their knowledge, covered the face of truth with the veil of kufr, and denied the signs of God.(۱)۶۷

This concludes our examination of the case where kufr exists but without ignorance, or the case of the kafir who knows. Now for the second case. who knows. Now for the .second case

The Ignorant Non-Kafir

A person who does not know the truth and does not claim to know it, is an ignorant non-kafir. In other words, someone, who does not express an opinion about what he does not know, or who admits not knowing, is ignorant, but is not a kafir, because he has not concealed anything. and kufr lies in the act of concealment. lies in the act of .concealment

Imam Sadeq is reported to have said: "If people when they do not know something pause and do not deny they have not committed kufr."(۲) This shows that this form of kufr resuts from denying something the essence of which the speaker does not know if person does not express an opinion about something he does not know, and does not deny the truth of it, he is not a kafir in respect to that truth, since by acknowledging his ignorance or by simply pausing and saying nothing he has not concealed the truth. An

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Today, most of the leaders of the tiny groups that in various ways are in opposition -۱ to the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran are fully aware who is in the right and who is the real supporter of the people. Where wise all the enemies of the Islamic Republic of Iran know that in all matters of principle the Islamic Republic is in the right. The United States knows this, as does the Soviet Union. as well as their satellites and

the tiny opposition groups affiliated to them. But their Pharaonic natures. in other words their oppressive nature and pride. Prevent them from acknowledging the truth.

۲- "Causes of Kufr ." Mizan. Chapter ۳۴۹۳.

ignorant person of this type is therefore not a kafir, although at the same time he is not a believer either., although at the same time he is not a believer either.

One of Imam Sadeq's followers, a certain Muhammad bin Muslim relates that one day when he was sitting on the Imam's left side and Zurara was sitting on his right Abu Basir entered and asked: "What is your opinion about someone who has doubts about the existence of God?" entered and asked: "What is your opinion about someone who has doubts about the existence of God?"

The Imam replied: "Such a person is a kafir." A few moments later, to amplify his answer, the Imam added: "Verily, he is a kafir if he denies the existence of God.(۱)۶۹

That is to say that if a person, has doubts about the existence of God but does not actually deny His existence he is not a kafir. A kafir is someone who although he has doubts and cannot produce any proofs that God does not exist nevertheless denies His existence. is someone who although he has doubts and cannot produce any proofs that God does not exist nevertheless denies His existence.

Regarding the question of whether or not an ignorant person who does not claim knowledge is a kafir or not there is another hadith, this time from the Imam 'Ali which raises an interesting point. The text of this hadith is as follows: 'If people who do not know about something refrain from

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۱- ۱۷۴۰۱ Ibid. Hadhith No.

commenting on it they will not be committing kufr nor straying from the true path'.(۱)۷۰

What is of special interest in this hadith is that according to the Imam if ignorant

people refrain from commenting on truths of which they are not aware, they will avoid not only being afflicted by the disease of kufr, but also going astray, that is to say an ignorant person who pauses and refrains from comment will gradually be drawn towards enquiring and investigation to discover the truth. Once he has entered the path of enquiring, with the goal of discovering the truth, he will be saved from error and deviation in his beliefs and will ultimately, through divine grace, discover the truth.discovering the truth, he will be saved from error and deviation in his beliefs and .will ultimately, through divine grace, discover the truth

In other words it seems that the Imam is implying that the root-cause of ideological error and deviation is comments made by ignorant and non-specialist persons, and that if such people refrained from expressing their opinions on matters they are ignorant of kufr and deviation would be eradicated from human society. and deviation .would be eradicated from human society

The Ignorant Kafir

A kafir who knows the truth is not ignorant, and the ignorant person who does not conceal his ignorance is not a kafir, but if an ignorant person conceals his ignorance .then ignorance and kufr are united in him.united in him

An ignorant kafir is therefore someone, who expresses his opinion about something he

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.Bihar-ol-Anvar. Vol. ۲. P ۱۲۰ -۱

is ignorant of. In the discussion which we will later have about understanding God we will see that people who deny the existence of God assuming that their reasoning is sound, can at the very most prove that man has no way of knowing the metaphysical world, that is to say he is not able to understand whether or not anything exists beyond the world which we know from the evidence of our senses.existence of God assuming that their reasoning is sound, can at the very most prove that man has no

way of knowing the metaphysical world, that is to say he is not able to understand whether or not anything exists beyond the world which we know from the evidence of our senses.

If such people confess their ignorance, they are not committing kufr. But so often they not only refrain from making such a confession but even claim to reap scientific results from their ignorance! They use their lack of knowledge as the basis of their theories about the metaphysical and transcendental world and claim that nothing exists beyond the world of our senses!. But so often they not only refrain from making such a confession but even claim to reap scientific results from their ignorance! They use their lack of knowledge as the basis of their theories about the metaphysical and transcendental world and claim that nothing exists beyond the world of our senses!

This is the true meeting-place of ignorance and kufr, that is to say that

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such people conceal their ignorance with scientific claims., that is to say that such people conceal their ignorance with scientific claims.

In concluding this chapter we must have two important questions.

The first is whether the result of research in all cases leads to truth and an understanding of reality? In other words does the researcher always arrive at an understanding of what he is searching for? Or is it possible that a person could carry out his research and not reach a conclusion, or perhaps imagine that he has reached a real understanding when in fact has not done so?searching for? Or is it possible that a person could carry out his research and not reach a conclusion, or perhaps imagine that he has reached a real understanding when in fact has not done so?

The second question is whether the criteria for understanding the correctness of a theory or opinion actually exist or not?The second question is whether the criteria for understanding the correctness of a theory or opinion actually exist or not?

The answer to the first question is that there are obstacles to and conditions affecting

understanding. and if the researcher can eliminate these and create conditions conducive to understanding then he wilt undoubtedly reach a conclusion. The obstacles and conditions will be discussed in the second book of the present work, and the second question will be deal with in the chapter that now follows.The answer to the first question is that there are obstacles to and conditions affecting

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Chapter ۴: Correction of Belief

point

One of the most important problems which must be studied before our discuss of ideological principles in depth is the question of correcting belief, that is to say, whether there is a method of achieving beliefs that arc correct and in accordance with reality, and of correcting wrong beliefs. And if so, what is this method?

The answer is, yes there is. And in this connection exact guidance is to be found

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.in Islamic texts, which has apparently hitherto not been discussed and analyzed

This guidance includes some of the most important points that a person-regardless of what ideology or religion he may have provided only that he really approaches ideological discussions with insight and a realistic outlook-must certainly examine. Then if he follows the advice given he can be confident of the results of his research .and enquiry

Before embarking on a discussion of Islamic guidance regarding correction of belief, however, we must first mention some of the most precarious ideological disease of .all, namely self- delusion of knowledgeability

The Disease Of Self-Delusion

Self-delusion, or imagining oneself to be knowledgeable on a matter, is a psychological disorder that is widespread, difficult to detect and diagnose, and if .chronic, it may be even incurable

This disease is also known as "compound ignorance." To clarify the matter, we may note that with regard to man's understanding of the facts of existence there are four main cases: The first is when a person knows something and knows that he knows it. .Such a person is really knowledgeable aware

The second case is when a person knows something but is not aware that, he knows it. Such a person is prove to carelessness and negligence and may be termed .""unaware

The third case is when he does not know something and is aware that he does not know it, that is to say he has knowledge of his ignorance. Such a person may be -."termed a "simple ignoramus

The fourth case is when someone does

not know something and is not aware that he does not know it, that is to say he has no

knowledge of his ignorance. He does not know, but he thinks he knows, such a person may be termed a "compound ignoramus"(۱). To summarize, with regard to understanding a person may be aware, unaware, a simple ignoramus or a compound .ignoramus

To explain matters further we may say that the difference between simple and compound ignorance is that the former consists of ignorance unadulterated by any other form of ignorance such as not knowing way in a given location, not recognizing a certain person, not understanding a certain scientific and so on; while the latter consists of two separate kinds of ignorance that are specifically related to each other.(۲) The first form of ignorance is that the person does not know something, which is simple ignorance, but the second is that he thinks his ignorance is a form of knowledge which is a different kind of ignorance, related to the first kind and known .as compound ignorance

For example, if a person does not know the direction he is going, but thinks he does, two forms of ignorance are compounded in him, the first not knowing the way, the second thinking that he does. Thinking that he knows is another form of ignorance which when compounded with the first form becomes what is termed compound .ignorance

So, if an ignorant person thinks he is knowledgeable indeed he is a compound ignorant, and compound

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۱ - Dehkhoda's Persian Dictionary defines a compound ignoramus thus: "One whose knowledge is not in accord with reality, one who thinks but really does not, as distinct ".from a simple ignorant, whose ignorance is absolute

۲ - Compound ignorance holding an opinion about the nature of something which is Contrary to its actual nature a firm belief at odds with reality, whether based on Uncertainly or Thus a compound ignorance firmness of belief is not valid. The reason why such a belief is termed compound ignorance is that a person holds an opinion

that is contrary to the facts, which is first form of ignorance, then he believes that his opinion is correct, which is a second form of ignorance, and these two forms are (compounded and hence known as compound ignorance.' (Dehkhoda

ignorance is the same as the disease of imaginary knowledge or delusion of .knowledgeability

A Universal Psychological Disorder

It must regretfully be acknowledged that most people are afflicted by this disorder in many areas of belief, particularly in three cases, where, as Imam Sadeq says, this is a .universal disorder

These three cases are religious beliefs, political beliefs and management. The words ;of the Imam, as transmitted to us, are as follows

There are three matters in which everyone considers himself to be in the right: the' religion he believes in: his passion for self-advancement; management of his own (affairs (i.e. His policy).(١

In these three areas everyone imagines that that he says is correct and in accordance .with reality, and nobody thinks that he is likely to be wrong

The Probability Of Error In Religious Beliefs

Regardless of what faith be believes in a person rarely entertains doubts about his .religious beliefs. No-one considers the possibility that his beliefs might be wrong

If you ask anyone about whether his religious beliefs are right or wrong, he will tell you dogmatically that only his beliefs are correct and in accordance with reality, therefore anyone who says otherwise, and any belief which is contrary to his beliefs, .is incorrect, not in accord with reality and unscientific

A Christian will say his faith is correct. a Jew will say what he says is true; a Zoroastrian will say his beliefs arc right; a Buddhist will say his religion is in accord with reality; a Communist will say all the others are wrong and only his school and

;philosophy are scientific

Mizan. Hadith No. ۶۱۸۳ -۱

and so on. And since no-one will admit to the possibility that what he considers to be .correct might be incorrect, no-one permits himself to carry out an enquiry

In the hadith just quoted Imam Sadeq considers such dogmatic thinking to be a kind of universal ideological sickness, and as long as a person remains afflicted by this disease there is no hope of him being able to correct his beliefs and choose a true .religion

The Probability of Error In Political Beliefs

After religious beliefs the second area in which nobody admits the possibility of being .wrong, and dogmatically believes he is in the right, is that of political beliefs

Every government and regime, every political organization and group, as well as every individual intent on seizing power, claims to be right, and says that only their .policies should be carry out and that only they have the right to rule

The leaders of the United States consider their political beliefs to be right and so do, the leaders of the Soviet Union and so does every other government and regime. Where wise within every government every party and group considers itself to be right and its rivals to be wrong, and within every party and group every individual so do aspires to leadership considers his political beliefs to be right and the beliefs of .others to be wrong

In a nutshell, there are as many political beliefs in the world as there arc parties and groups and aspirants to political leadership and each of these considers its beliefs and policies

.to be correct and those of the others to be wrong

In fact, a brief study of the conduct of all aspirants to power shows that all they are really interested in is their personal advancement, and what they put forward as their political beliefs is really nothing other than an excuse and a bridge to reach to their goal of power and control. For this reason the Imam, calls the beliefs and policies of .such ambitious people the 'passion for self-advancement

The Probability Of Error In Management

The third area in which everyone believes himself to be right is management. Nobody thinks that in the management and planning of affairs which have been entrusted to him he might be wrong. Everyone, whatever position of authorities he occupies is .absolutely convinced that he is the best of all managers and planners

From the head of a government to the head of a family everyone considers himself a .prudent manager and will not tolerate criticism from any quoter

In short, dogmatism in religious, political and managerial beliefs is a universal (ideological sickness threatening the human societies.(۱

The Danger Of Self-Delusion

This type of self-delusion is one of the most precarious diseases affecting mankind, and its cure especially if it is Chronic-is extremely difficult or even impossible. Experience shows that those who are suffering from this disease are rarely cured, because a person who does not know, and does not know that he does not know is inherently incapable even of contemplating the need for a cure for his ignorance let alone thinking about the cure itself

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۱ - Some examples of warning to the people against this sickness could be found in .Holy Quran in the following verses. ۱۲/۴۰, ۵/۱۰۳. ۵/۵۸

.so he is destined to flounder forever in the log of compound ignorance

The person who knows (and who knows that he knows) to celestial spheres on his thoroughbred goes, The person who knows not (yet knows that he knows not) however on his lame little donkey may trot. But the person who knows not (and knows !not he knows not) thread forever in ignorance, that is his lot

The Cure For Self-Delusion

With this brief introduction in mind we must now see what guidance Islam provides to .correct beliefs and prevent or cure the disease of self-delusion

The prevention and treatment of self-delusion and the way to achieve correct beliefs depend on two fundamentals: the removal from our reason of obstacles to understanding, and the creation of condition conducive understanding: the guidance of Islam is nothing other than this. However, since in the second part of this series of discussions we shall be examining these two matters in detail we will refrain from .discussing them here

What this chapter deals with is what the Islamic texts specifically have to say regarding obstacles to the correction of belief and the conditions for such correction, although these matters are to some extent alluded to the question of obstacles to and .conditions for understanding

Obstacles To The Correction Of Belief

The question of obstacles to the correction of belief is one that can cause mistakes and mental error, in such cases the researcher cannot be sure that his judgment and .belief are in accord with reality

The first to devise ways preventing erroneous thought was Aristotle (۴۴۷-۳۸۴

.B.C.), the founder of logic

The source and basis of Aristotle's achievement in discovering how to acquire'

knowledge, were the ideas of Socrates and Plan, but his extremely precise mind was not satisfied with the Socratic method of argument, and he did not consider Platonic .ideas on the origin of knowledge and the path to wisdom to be entirely realistic

While rejecting the false logic and disputes of the sophists and polemicist he laid the foundations of his philosophy on discovering the correct rules for recovering and extracting the truth, and following in the footsteps of Plato and Socrates he acquired the principles of logic and the rules of analogy. The foundations Aristotle built on were (so firmly laid that no-one since him has added a single thing.(۱

In the language of the logicians, 'logic is a tool consisting of rules and laws the use of .which preserves the mind from erroneous thinking

From the time of Bacon (۱۵۶۰-۱۶۲۵) and Descartes (۱۵۹۶-۱۶۵۰) European philosophers began to realize that Aristotelian logic was inadequate to prevent errors of thought. Descartes was convinced that: "The rules of logic' however correct and firm they may be, cannot make the unknown known, and their real use is in knowing expressions and acquiring the skills of understanding and explaining, since proof consists of deducing conclusions from preliminary data. So if the data is not known there can be no conclusions, for with the rules of logic alone knowledge cannot be acquired, and if correct data is available the conclusion

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۱- Mohammad Ali Forougi' Seir Hikmah dar Orupa (The Development of Philosophy in .Europe)., (Tehran, zavvar, ۱۳۴۴). Vol. ۱, p. ۳۱

.will follow accordingly

"Man's judgment by its very nature, applies the rules of logic, and does not need all the discussions and disputes of the logicians. And if the available data is wrong, the conclusion drawn must inevitably be wrong too, and instead of knowledge error will result. For this reason those who have sought knowledge, even knowing the rules of .logic well, have made many errors

In his clear explanation Descartes, and also Francis Bacon in his "new Organ"(۱) claim to have invented a new kind of logic. The French philosopher and the English scientist tried to show that

Aristotle an logic is not a means of discovering the unknown, and the importance given to this logic by the scholastics did not justify their devoting the major part of their time to its study and use.(۲)

Bacon and Descartes were aware that reasoning could be proving to error from two sources:

a) the raw data which the mind assumes to be self-evident and takes as the basis of its reasoning, and treats as the bricks and matter of its argument.

b) the shape, form, order and arrangement which the mind gives to these raw materials.

Testing for errors by Aristotelian logic relates to the form of the reasoning process and for this reason this logic is called 'formal logic'. It makes no provision for testing for errors in the substance and basis on which the reasoning in question depends, whereas what really matter as far as preventing errors of thought and correcting beliefs are concerned is

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۱- An unfinished work of Bacon's.

۲- Forougi's op-cit. pp. ۱۱۴. ۱۱۶.

the validification of the substance, because man's intuitive judgment can apply the rules of logic even without knowing the technical terms for them.

The new logic which Bacon proposed for the validification of substantive matter to which reasoning is applied consisted of avoiding obstacles to the discovery of truth, which he defines as tribal, personal, commercial and showing idols:

Man is faced with a number of difficulties in his search for knowledge, which he must" try to avoid. The most serious of these are the errors which affect his judgment. Since these errors can cause a person to stray from the true path Bacon refers to them as ."idols" and divide them into four categories

The first category consists of "tribal idols", that is to say errors which emanate from' the characteristics of man. Own nature since just as in a distorting mirror rays of light are refracted in an abnormal way so as to produce ugly and unnatural images. So too .perceptions and rational ideas can be distorted and deformed by man's mind

For example, when a dream and reality happen to coincide he may take this as a point of reference, but this shill not happen a hundred times. He will not remember, however, and will remain firmly attached in the most bigoted way to the beliefs he has chosen, and will tend to lose his impartiality and base his conclusion on emotions and .personal whims

Pride and conceit fear and lust will totally affect his judgment. A person's serves

p: ۶۶

which are the source of his knowledge, are defective and prone to error ensuring that he will not be prepared to correct his errors through reflection and contemplation. He .judges by appearances without delving fully into matters

The second category is personal idols, in other words errors which affect people because of their individual natures, such as the fact that everyone has their pet interest in which they base their beliefs, like Aristotle who was- obsessed by logic and based his entire philosophy on it. Some people's minds are attracted towards similarities and generalizations; others see differences and particularities everywhere. Some people are by nature prone to dogma, others to doubt and .uncertainty, to the extent that they may even become complete skeptics

Bacon's third category is "commercial idols", that is to say errors which occur from transactions among people as a result of deficiencies in the words and expressions

."used to convey their meanings such as "luck", "chance" and "destiny

The fourth category is "apparent idols", by which Bacon means errors caused by the (erroneous teachings of philosophers...(١

Descartes also proposed principles and rules to prevent erroneous thinking and guarantee that the substantive matter forming the basis of philosophic nations is :correct. The first of these principles is

I will not hold any proposition to be true unless it is self-evident to me, and in my' validification of it I will avoid hasty or preconceived judgment, and personal inclination, not accepting its truth unless it is so obvious and distinct that I have no

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.Ibid -١

(doubt whatsoever about it."(١

The Scientific Marvel of the Quran

point

More than a thousand years before the question arose of identifying and in valuating error in the substance of reasoning and all that, which the European scientists came to ten centuries later was encapsulated in the ٢٣rd verse of the Surah the Star, which :is an example of the scientific miracles of the Quran

.(The unbelievers follow naught but idle speculations and their sensual whims.' (۵٣:٢٣'

In other words, two things cause man to succumb to error in his opinions and beliefs: .following idle speculations and following personal inclinations

Other matters such as fanaticism, Taqlid, despotism and obstinacy are of course discussed in the Islamic traditions as causing erroneous thinking, but they all relate back to personal inclinations, and what the hadith have to say on this subject is in

.effect no more than further commentary on this verse

With this introduction now completed we can proceed to a study of obstacles to the correction of belief as seen from the standpoint of the Quran and the hadith. These :obstacles as already stated, consist of the following

a) idle speculation

b) personal inclinations

c) fanaticism

d) Taqlid

e) bigotry

f) obstinacy

a) Idle Speculation

Idle speculation and conjecture are dangerous stumbling blocks that have caused .most people in world to go astray and fall into the abyss of erroneous belief

The first guidance that the Quran provide for the correction of belief is to avoid relying on such stumbling-blocks. The Quran stresses that believers should not base their opinions and beliefs on mere speculation and conjecture, and that until something has

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Ibid. p. ۱۳۹. (The other principles of Cartesian logic are quoted on pp. ۱۴۱-۱۴۳ of - ۱ .(Forougi's work

been conclusively proved, to them they should not adopt it as true. The Quran :explicitly states

.(Do not follow what you do not have knowledge of. (۱۷:۳۶'

That is to say according to the Quran, a Muslim does not have the right to follow something or adopt it as a basis for action unless it has been conclusively proved to .his satisfaction

The Quran criticizes people with false opinions and beliefs for saying something which :is not clearly defined and known to them

.(You open your mouth to speak that which you have no knowledge or. (۲۴:۱۵'

The Quran criticize those who deny life after death on the grounds that they have no reason for such a denial, and their opinion is based not on scientific knowledge but :purely on speculation and conjecture

They say, "There is this life on earth and no other. We die, and others are born.' Nothing destroys us except time." But they have no knowledge. of this, and what they .(say is mere conjecture.' (۴۵:۲۴

The objection of the Quran to those who consider creation to be purposeless and futile is that the basis of their belief is not scientific and that if they take a little trouble they will realize that they have no knowledge of what they believe, and that their :beliefs are in fact the result of mere speculation and conjecture

We did not create the heavens and the earth and all that lies between them in vain:' '.such is the supposition of the unbelievers

p: ۶۹

.(۳۸:۲۷)

If we investigate and analyze the conflicting opinions and views of people in various societies we see clearly that most of them lack any scientific basis and originate from speculation and 'conjecture. People everywhere, in older times and today, follow their fancies in questions of ideology, particularly with regard to ideological principles. This is why the Quran explicitly states that anyone who follows the majority will be led :astray

If you follow the majority of people in the world you will astray from the path of God,' .(because they follow nothing, but idle speculation and guess.' (۶:۱۱۶

If one day the followers of all religious and devotees of every different persuasion decide to follow nothing but scientific knowledge and not believe anything until it was completely and clearly known to them the problem of religious and ideological .differences would largely be solved

Imam Sadeq is reported as saying: 'God provided his servants with two Quranic verses, one to the effect that until they have acquired knowledge of a thing they should not accept it as true, nor should they express an opinion about something that they do not understand, the other that they should not deny something they do not understand. God's words in the first verse are: 'Is it not incumbent upon them according to... the to ascribe nothing to God except what is true?' (۷:۱۶۹). The second (verse states: Verily they disbelieve what they cannot understand.' (۱۰:۳۹).(۱

b) Personal inclinations

The second dangerous stumbling-block to correct thought according to the Quran, consists of personal

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.Seyyed Mohammad Hossein Tabataba'I, Tafsir al-Mizan (Arabic ed.) Vol VIII, p. ۳۰۴ -۱

.inclinations, which if not greater than the first is certainly no less

When a person loves or is attached to a thing his feelings blind his reason and prevent him from thinking properly, so that he cannot see or understand the weak points of .his beloved. Hatred has the same effect

If someone wants to see the weak and strong points of a theory and think correctly about it he must therefore free himself from personal inclinations, for unless he does .so they cannot help affecting his judgment

There is a well-known story of Allama Hilli,(1) a learned jurisprudent, when he was preparing to issue a fatwah on whether a contaminated well could be purified or not First gave order that the well of his own house should be filled in. Then he sat down to study the legal precedents. The fatwah he finally issued was to the effect that the polluted well could he purified by following the instructions given by earlier authorities.

The learned judge realized that unless his own well was filled in it might be that any potential loss to him might subconsciously affect his judgment. It is an undeniable fact that until a person has filled in the well of his own inclinations and interests and freed his mind of all desire and fancy he cannot correctly perceive the truth as he should, or express an unbiased opinion on a matter.

This is why more the mind of a researcher is cleansed of personal inclination the closer he will approach

p: ۷۱

۱- Abu Mansur Hasan b.Sadid al-Din Yusef b. Ali al-Mutahhar al-Hilli (d.۶۲۶/۱۲۲۶).

the truth of a matter. In the words of Imam Ali: 'The wisest opinion is the one, which is the furthest from personal inclination'.(1) Or in another version: 'The best of opinions is the one furthest from personal inclination'.(2)

Zeid bin Sowhan, one of the followers of the commander of the Faithful, once asked him whose opinion was the most realistic and constant. The Imam replied:

'The person who is not deceived by suggestions of the multitude nor by the vanities of this world'.(3)

c) Fanaticism

point

Another obstacle to the attainment of correct and realistic belief is fanaticism.

Fanaticism or excess prejudice is an extreme case of following one's personal

inclinations in supporting an individual or individuals, or a thing, without regard for the .truth

Supporting members of your own family, group or tribe, political party, caucus or organization, culture or customs, religion or sect race, language, in other words supporting anything or anyone is fanaticism, if it is on the basis of personal inclinations .and without regard for truth and justice

!The leader of the fanatics

According to the commander of the faithful the model for fanatics is the Devil himself. The Imam describes the Devil thus: '(The Devil is) the leader of the fanatics and the front runner of the arrogant. It is he that laid the foundations of fanaticism'.(۴)

The first fanatic in the world was the Devil and racial prejudice was the form of fanaticism he adopted. He considered himself to be racially superior to man and thought that this was sufficient reason to disobey the divine order to prostrate

p: ۷۲

۱- Mizan Hadith No. ۶۸۴۸.

۲- Ibid. No. ۶۸۴۹.

۳- Bihar al-Anwar Vol. ۷۷. p. ۳۷۸.

۴ - Persian translation and commentary by Feiz ol-Eslam of Imam'Ali's NahjaI.balagheh.

himself before Adam. When God asked the Devil why he refused to do so he replied frankly: 'Because I am from of fire and Adam is born of earth!'

The effects of fanaticism

If this diabolical vice takes root in a person its first effect and greatest danger is to color his judgment accordingly. In other words fanaticism is in general a kind of psychological sickness which prevents a person from arriving at what is true and in accordance with reality as regards his research and analysis, or the conclusions he

draws from them. The analysis and studies of a fanatic will therefore result in him .forming views which are dictated by his fanaticism

The disease of fanaticism leads the fanatic to treat the speaker and not what he says, as the criterion for his judgment. Fanaticism does not let a person think about what is said, and whether it is true or false, right or wrong, it merely prompts him to ask "Who's the speaker"' If it's someone who thinks like he does then his ideas are .correct, and if not then he's wrong

The guidance given by Islam the correction of belief is that the veil of fanaticism must be removed from the eye of reason, and that the words spoken, not the person who .speaks, should be the standard for judgment

The guidance given by Islam for the correction of belief is that fanaticism and prejudice must be set aside and attention paid only to what is said and to the ideas expressed, regardless of

p: ۷۳

who they might be, or of what political party or group they arc from, whether their cultural background is like ours or not, whether they are Muslims or not, and even .whether they are your friends or enemies

:How beautifully and clearly the Quran expresses this

Give good news to those of my servants who hear to what is said and follow the best' of it. They are those whom God has rightly guided, and they are those of .(understanding' (۳۹:۱۸

In other words, people of understanding and those who follow the precepts of God and the Quran and Islam are those who listen to the words of all manner of men, arid .after due analysis and study adopt only what is correct, exact and beneficial

Inspired by this Quranic verse there is a hadith ascribed in the Kanz al-Ummal to the prophet of Islam and in the Ghurar al-Hikam to the Commander of the Faithful that

:explicitly states

(Do not regard, who has spoken but what is spoken'.(١'

In another beautiful expression dealing with the same subject the prophet of God :Jesus says

Accept true words even from the unrighteous, but do not accept untruths even from' (the righteous. And subject all you hear to criticism.’(٢

In other words, fanaticism must not lead a Muslim to reject the truth if it is presented by others purely on the grounds that they are flit Muslims and their beliefs are wrong, or to accept what is wrong from people out of fanaticism because they are his co-religionists. The

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.Mizan Hadith No. ١٣۵٨٠ -١
.Ibid. No. ١٣۵٨٢ -٢

duty of a Muslim is to subject the words of any speaker, regardless of his overall ideological orientation, to

rigorous criticism and study, and if what he says is true to accept it, even though he may be unrighteous, and equally if what a person says is wrong not to accept it even if he is righteous. In either case the yardstick should be the truth, not the speaker, and Islam is nothing other than submission to the truth, and it is for this reason that the .prophet of Islam said that fanaticism is incompatible with being a Muslim

A person who, practices fanaticism or allows it to be practiced, has loosed the collar' (of taith-Islam-from his neck'.(١

d) Taqlid

Taqlid in matters of belief, that is to say, accepting the views of others without studying their reasons and proofs is one of the of effects of fanaticism and an

obstacle to research and investigate which can prevent a person from arriving at .correct, scientific and realistic opinions and beliefs

Taqlid is a chain that fetters man's intellect and as long as it exists it is impossible for him to correct his belief. Taqlid prevents man from asking himself whether his beliefs are true or false, realistic or unrealistic, scientific or pseudoscientific, or based on true understanding or self-delusion. Taqlid prevents man from subjecting the thoughts, .words or beliefs of others to independent criticism and study

Taqlid imprison man by force in the confines of the beliefs and ideas of the person who is his model. Taqlid

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.Ibid. No. ۱۲۷۳۲ -۱

.induces a person to disregard the massage and consider only the person delivering it

The guidance of Islam as regards the correction of belief is to break this chain. What is strange is that there are so few people who are not so fettered. And even stranger .is the number of scholars who imagine themselves to be independent thinkers

e) Bigotry

The fifth obstacle to the correction of belief is bigotry. Bigotry is one of the consequences of following one's personal inclinations and of extreme self-delusion. This disease desiccates, stultifies and petrifies a person's mind and prevents him from .advancing towards the truth

As a result the bigot believes that everything he says, and every belief and custom and opinion he holds is correct, while everything his opponents say is wrong. When a person's mind stultifies he becomes incapable of even considering the opinions of others where these differ from his own, or of thinking about what others have to say, .and therefore he is unable to arrive at the truth

In the Islamic traditions bigotry is considered a dangerous stumbling-block to thought and a thinker who is subject to bigotry is certain to fall into the abyss of destruction. Imam Sadeq had this to say on the matter. `The bigot stands on the brink of a (precipice'.(۱

:Imam 'Ali is quoted on the dangers of narrow mindedness and bigotry as follows

The bigot faces imminent error'.(۲) 'Bigotry will slip you and cast you into the` (abyss.(۳

The bigot is destined for destruction.'(۴) 'The person who favors only his'

.Ibid, No. ۶۸۵۳ -۱

.Ibid, No. ۶۸۵۴ -۲

.Ibid, No. ۶۸۵۵ -۳

.Ibid, No. ۶۸۵۶ -۴

own opinion stands in grave danger'.(۱) In another hadith Imam 'Ali says that a person who contents himself with his own opinion and disregards that of others lacks (discommend: 'The person who relies only on his own opinion has no opinion.'(۲

J) Obstinacy

Another obstacle to the correction of belief is obstinacy. Obstinacy in discussion and in the matters of opinion is a dangerous stumbling-block to thought, which it secretly leads astray, resulting in incorrect opinions, without the thinker realizing that this is happening. The Commander of the Faithful uses an elegant phrase to describe this (phenomenon: 'Obstinacy is a sneak-thief of opinions.(۳

In other words, just like a thief that secretly enters a house and without the owner realizing steals what he fancies, so fanaticism and obstinacy when they enter a person's mind unconsciously affect his thoughts and without him sensing it distort his .judgment and deprive him of sound views

It follows that in effect obstinate and stubborn people cannot be real thinkers. As the commander of the faithful puts it: 'The obstinate man is a man of no opinion.(۴) Even if in one or two cases an obstinate person has a correct opinion the fanaticism and stubbornness which he displays in presenting his views deprive them of their validity.

To quote the commander of the faithful again: 'Obstinacy corrupts a man's judgment.(۵) In a final word from Imam Ali: 'Obstinacy begins with, ignorance and ends with repentance.(۶)

Conditions For The Correction Of Beliefs

point

The conditions for the correction of beliefs that the researcher requires if he is to reach the

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۱- Ibid, No. ۶۸۵۷.

۲- Ibid, No. ۶۸۵۸. Further examples of hadith on the subject of bigotry are quoted in Mizan Chapters ۱۴۲۵ and ۲۵۱۴.

۳- Ibid. ۱۷۸۱۴.

۴- Ibid. No. ۱۷۸۱۵.

۵- Ibid. No. ۱۷۸۱۶.

۶- Ibid. No. ۱۷۸۳۲

truth, and without which he cannot be confident of the results of his research, consist of the following:

۱- Avoidance of haste

۲- Experience

۳- Concentration

۴- Stimulating the mind

Exchange of views -۵

Divine assistance -۶

:These will now be discussed

Avoidance of haste -۱

This means avoiding haste in expressing one's opinions and allowing one's views to mature. When a researcher reflects on a subject at first he often arrives at a theory which is crude and unreliable. By taking his time and allowing himself the opportunity to study the matter more thoroughly and analyze it in all its dimensions and aspects, so that his theory becomes refined and reliable. In the words of the commander of the faithful: 'The Sound judgment cannot be reached in haste, and hasting judgment...(۱).

Hasting judgment deprives the researcher of the opportunity to carry out a full and detailed study and leads him to erroneous ideas and incorrect analysis. As the Commander of the Faithful: 'Haste causes error'.(۲) There is also a hadith of the prophet in the subject: 'A person who avoids haste will reach a correct opinion, or gets close to one, while the hasting person will be wrong, or nearly so.(۳)

The avoidance of haste will lead a researcher to a correct judgment, or one close to the truth. If the other conditions for the corrections of belief are present he will certainly arrive at the truth,

or at least he will not be for wrong. By contrast, haste will lead a researcher into error, and if he does happen to arrive at

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.Ibid. No. ۶۴۳۲ -۱

.Ibid. No. ۱۱۶۲۱ -۲

.Ibid. No. ۱۱۶۲۷ -۳

the truth it will be by chance. For this reason the Commander of the Faithful at a

critical juncture shortly before his death advised his son, Imam Hasan, to avoid haste (in words or deeds: 'I forbid you to act hastily in speech or action'.(1)

Experience -2

The opinions and analysis of people without sufficient experience and qualifications to express views are usually unrealistic and wrong. In this regard, there is a short but profound hadith of Imam 'Ali that says: A man's judgment is commensurate with his (experience."(2)

In other words, the greater a person's experience in matters relevant to the subject under discussion, the closer will his opinion be to reality, that is to say the more .qualified and experienced a person is the more correct will his views be

Another hadith ascribed to this Imam tells us: "The most qualified people to express an opinion are those with experience."(3) For this reason the Imam considers knowledge and science acquired through experience and testing to be more accurate than knowledge acquired in the class-room, and in his view medical knowledge gained through experience is closer to the true philosophy and science of medicine .than is medical knowledge acquired through formal instruction

Another hadith from the Imam says: The experienced practitioner does a better job than an unexperienced physician.(4) In general, in Imam 'Ali's opinion, If a person has sufficient experience in any subject, he will carry out his task in a correct and proper manner: 'The person who has stored experience when the occasion

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.Ibid. No. ٢١۴٧٨ -1

.Ibid. No. ٢٣٠۴ -2

.Ibid. No. ١٠٨۵٠ -3

.Ibid. No. ١٠٨۴٩ -4

(comes to use them he will do things correctly.(1)

The role of experience in ensuring that one's views arc realistic and correct is so great that Imam 'AIi, although we consider him to be immune from sin or error, has some verses ascribed to him which have already been quoted.۳۶ in which after describing himself as an expert in theoretical problems and intellectual matters, he says that relies on his experience in expounding his views: "I use analogy and knowledge vast". ('And often read the future in the past.(۲

In this couplet, Imam All tells us that he relies on his extensive experience to reach his judgment and emphasizes that he is not a person to accept the opinions of others unquestioningly, but rather draws on his knowledge of the past and the use of .analogy to foresee what the future holds in store

Concentration –۳

point

Concentrating one's thoughts helps a researcher to define the parameters of the problem he is faced with, and then express his opinion in the light of every aspect of it. It follows that the more a person concentrates on his research the closer he will come to the truth, and the less he concentrates the further away he will find himself. A researcher who wants his opinion to be correct must therefore do all he can to ensure .his concentration and avoid anything that may lessen it

?What are the factors affecting concentration

Factors Affecting Concentration

point

In a Hadith of Imam Sadeq the main factors affecting a person's concentration are listed. The text of

.Ibid. No. ۲۳۰۶. The present book, p. ۱۸ -۱
.Ref. to the title of Taqlid (imitation) in beliefs from the stand point of hadith -۲

the hadith is as follows: 'There are five conditions the lack of any one of which will cause a person to have an inadequate life, a mind that wastes away, and a troubled heart. The first is good physical health, the second, security, the third, sufficient sustenance, the fourth, congenial companions, the fifth-which is the compendium of (all these conditions-tranquility.'(۱

We may note that in this tradition the Imam first mentions those conditions each of which plays a vital role in the attainment of a fulfilled life, a healthy mind and a tranquil spirit. It is these conditions that are conducive to concentration, and if they are absent a person will be unable to concentrate properly. The Imam then describes each of .them

a) Health

The first essential for tranquility of spirit and proper mental concentration and accuracy of understanding is good physical health. In this regard there are two proverbs, one Persian, one Arabic, which are probably derived from this tradition of .Imam Sadeq's or a similar one

The Persian proverb is 'A healthy mind in a healthy body(۲) and the Arabic one is 'The judgment of a sick man is sick.' These proverbs contain valuable advice, which are .conformed by experience

b) Social security

The second prerequisite for tranquility of spirit and concentration mind is social security. A person who does not feel secure, and sees himself constantly beset by danger, invariably loses his ability to concentrate and as a result his judgment is .unlikely to be correct or in accordance with reality

c) Adequate sustenance

The third condition listed by

.Mizan Hadith No. ۱۴۴۶۶ -۱

The same proverb was used in Ancient Rome under the words mens sana in - ۲ .corpore sano

the Imam for the attainment of tranquility and the proper functioning of the intellect .and hence fulfillment of life is that a person should have adequate sustenance

If he is impoverished and his mind permanently concerned with where his next meal will come from he obviously cannot be listed among the leading thinkers and his opinions and beliefs will lack scientific value. This is why Imam 'Ali is reported to have spoken the following words on the subject of poverty. "Verily poverty begets forgetfulness of the soul and anxiety of the mind, and attracts cares and griefs of (every kind".(۱

In another tradition, Imam 'Ali tells his son Imam Hasan that a person afflicted by poverty suffers from four related factors: 'Uncertainty, diminishment of mental (power, fragility religion and a lack of modesty.'(۲

d) Congenial Companions

The fourth condition which according to Imam Sadeq has a basic role in the .attainment of peace of mind and mental health is having congenial companions

Abu Khaled Sajestani, the realtor of this hadith, says when he asked the Imam what he meant by congenial companions the reply was: 'I meant a worthy spouse, worthy '.children and worthy friends

e) Tranquility of soul

The fifth condition facilitating mental concentration and sound judgment is tranquility .'of the soul, for which the Imam uses the word 'da'at

Da'at is a word meaning literally 'calmness' or 'repose' and means tranquility or' peace of the soul as opposed to tranquility from the social point of view, which was .discussed as 'social security' as the second of these conditions

An important aspect of

.Ibid. No. ۱۵۶۹۳ -۱

Ibid. No. ۱۵۶۹۴. Another similar hadith is ascribed to Imam 'Ali: 'Verily poverty - ۲ '...weakens a person's devoutness, cause mental anxiety and

the Imam's words which we must not overlook is that this condition is inclusive of the other conditions listed, that is to say tranquility of the soul can fill any voids caused by absence of the other conditions health, social security, adequate sustenance, .congenial companions

In other words the fact that plays the most important role in the fulfillment of life and a healthy mind and mental contentment is inner peace, and the four conditions mentioned are preliminaries to the attainment of tranquility of soul. Therefore if a person by training his soul can attain to a high degree of spirituality, certitude and tranquility, so that neither sickness nor insecurity poverty nor lack of congenial companionship can deprive him of such inner peace he will have acquired the key to .mental concentration, sound judgment and fulfillment

In short, the other conditions for achieving mental concentration all require tranquility of soul, but such tranquility may he achieved without them. We may therefore summarize the words of the Imam as follows: First, health, security, adequate sustenance and congenial companionship each play a fundamental role in acquiring peace of mind, mental concentration and fulfillment of life, provided they are .accompanied by tranquility of soul

Secondly, tranquility of soul in highly spiritual persons may often take the place of the other conditions. To put it in a nutshell, we may say that a basic condition for mental .concentration is tranquility of soul

Obstacles to mental concentration

In general, anything that causes one's thoughts to be distracted, and anything that preoccupies a

p: ٨٣

researcher's mind other, than the matter he is researching, is an obstacle to mental concentration and a hindrance to correct judgment. This is why in a number of Islamic traditions it is recommended that a judge while deliberating and giving his opinion should not be angry, sleepy, hungry or thirsty, because all of these conditions are .obstacles to mental concentration

The Prophet of Islam is reported to have forbidden a judge to give judgment while he is angry, hungry or thirsty.(١) and in another hadith he is quoted as saying that he should not decide a case between two parties, unless he is free from hunger and thirst,(٢) Imam 'Ali advised a judge named Shoraih never to sit in judgment unless he had eaten.(٣)

With a little thought, it becomes obvious that anyone who expresses his opinion about a matter should follow the advice contained in these traditions, if he is to achieve mental concentration and ensure that his opinion is close to reality. For in this case there is no difference between a judge and a layman, and in fact anyone who expresses an opinion about a matter has made a judgment, even if he is not a .professional judge

Imam Sadeq is reported to have said that one day a group of children who were learning to write brought what they had written to the Commander of the Faithful for him to decide who’s was the best. The Imam said: But verily this is an arbitration and a wrong decision in

.Ibid. No. ۱۶۵۴۴-۱۶۵۵۰ -۱

.Ibid. No. ۱۶۵۴۴-۱۶۵۵۰ -۲

.Ibid. No. ۱۶۵۴۴-۱۶۵۵۰ -۳

(this is like a miscarriage of justice.'(۱

In other words giving an opinion as to who writes best is a kind of judgment and if the rights of one child are ignored it is as if the rights of a litigant in a real court were .abused

So a person wanting to express his opinion must shun all obstacles to mental concentration if he is avoid error, and in this, there is no difference between a judge .and a layman, who makes judgments

Another point concerning the traditions quoted is that there is no difference between hunger, thirst, anger and sleepiness and other obstacles to concentration such as extreme cold or heat tight-fitting garments or footwear, pressure of the bladder or howl, or any other factor that distracts the mind and presents a person, from thinking .clearly

Ab al-As relates that Imam 'Ali was once asked a question by a man outside his house. The Imam entered his house without replying and shortly afterwards came out and asked where the man with the question was. The man was still there and said' Here I am.' The Imam told him to repeat his question which he did, and proceeded to answer .it

One of those present who had observed the speed with which the Imam was wanted to reply to all sorts of questions on many different occasions was surprised that this time he had not given an immediate answer. So said to the Imam: 'Commander of the faithful, as I have often seen you are

.Ibid, No. ۱۶۵۹۴ -۱

like a fire brand in dealing with questions, so how is it that today you delayed ?answering, this man until you had gone into your house come out again

The Imam replied: 'This time I was surprising the urge to urinate, Tree kinds of people have no worthwhile opinion: Those who are suppressing the urge to urinate and (those, whose shoes are too tight. '(۱

Stimulating the mind -۴

Stimulating the mind and preventing it from stultifying is another condition for the attainment of sound judgment and correct belief. The guidance provided by the Commander of the Faithful in this regard is as follows: 'Agitate your ideas in the receptacle of the mind as you shake milk in a skin to [make butter] and the result will (be correct views.(۲

If the mind stops at a given view it will petrify, and will therefore be incapable of growth and development, or of arriving at a real understanding of whether that view .is right or wrong. or its arguments strong or weak

The Imam therefore emphasizes that a researcher, if he is to reach correct beliefs and sound judgment, must prevent his mind from petrifying, stimulating thoughts intensely shake up ideas in his brain and subject every aspect of the theory he is .examining to close

Exchange of views -۵

Another condition for the correction of belief is the exchange of views. I see the Commander of the Faithful gives the following advice: 'Submit your views to other (people and listen to their. On this way sound opinions wilt emerge.(۳

The exchange of views between

Majlesi in Bihar al-Anwar Vol. ١١. Pp ۵٩-۶٠ comments that the third category has -١ been omitted by the copyist. By analogy with ether traditions he takes this to be,' .those who are suppressing a bowel movement

Mizan. Hadith No. ۶٨٣۴ -٢

.Ibid. No. ۶٨٣٣ -٣

various people provided it is conducted in a spirit free from prejudice will naturally bring to light all their strong and weak points, truths and errors. A person

who allows himself to study and scrutinize the views and beliefs of others provided he .adopts a scholarly approach will easily come to see which is correct and which false

In the words of Imam 'Ali: 'Anyone who encounters with various aspects of the views, can tell which are right and which are false.(١) By contrast, a person who does not allow himself to consider the views of others and by relying solely on his own mind expresses a hurried opinion will, as the Imam says, he prone to horrible errors: 'He (who is unfamiliar with the views of others will be tired out by mental effort'.(٢

Divine Assistance -۶

A factor which plays a vital role in arriving at scientific views leading to the discovery .of facts and the correction of beliefs is divine assistance

However careful and scholarly a person may be, because of the limitations of his knowledge he is usually unable to arrive at a complete understanding of the problems he is studying, or to be fully aware of every aspect of them. If he wishes to get to the truth, especially in complex scientific problems, he therefore needs divine assistance, .or, to use an alternative expression, a kind of inspiration or enlightenment

This is why Alexis Carrel, believes that scientific discoveries are not solely the product (and effect of human thought. As he puts it:(٣

.Ibid. No. ۶٨٣٨ -١

.Ibid. No. ۶۸۳۹ -۲

.Man. The Unknown. translated by Parviz Dabiri. Tehran. offset. pp. ۱۳۹.۱۴۰ -۳

Obviously, great discoveries are not the product of intelligence alone. Men of genius," in addition to their powers of observation and comprehension, possess other qualities, such as intuition and creative imagination. Through intuition they learn things ignored by other men, they perceive relations between seemingly isolated phenomena they unconsciously feel the presence of the unknown treasure. All great men are endowed with intuition. They know, without analysis, without reasoning, .what is important for them to know

A true leader of men does not need psychological tests, or reference cards, when choosing his subordinates. A good judge, without going into the details of legal arguments, and even, according to Cardozo, starting from erroneous premises, is capable of rendering a just sentence. A great scientist instinctively takes the path .leading to a discovery. This phenomenon, in former times, was called inspiration

Men of science belong to two different types: the logical and the intuitive. Science owes its progress to both forms of minds. Mathematics, although a purely logical structure, nevertheless makes use of intuition. Among the mathematicians there are intuitive and logicians, analysts and geometricians. Hermitte and Weierstrass were intuitive, Riemann and Bertrand, logicians. The discoveries of intuition have always to .be developed by logic

In ordinary life, as in science; intuition is a powerful but dangerous means of acquiring knowledge. Sometimes it can hardly be distinguished from illusion. Those who rely upon it entirely are liable to mistakes. It is far from being always trustworthy. But the great man, or the simple

p: ۸۸

whose heart is pure, can be led by it to the summits of mental and spiritual life. It is a strange quality. To apprehend reality without the help of intelligence appears ".inexplicable

The French mathematician Jacques Hadama confirms this opinion. As he says: If we consider the conditions in which discoveries and inventions take place we cannot ignore the effects of sudden inner perceptions. Every research scientist has to some extent had the feeling that his life and his profession are formed by a series of alternating activities, in some of which his determination and intelligence are the deciding factors, while the rest are the result of a series of inspirations.(١)

We can therefore say that the greater the degree of divine assistance and inspiration a scientist has the more correct will his opinions and theories be and the more scientific facts will be discover, and if divine assistance to a person is total all his theories and views will be free from error.

Materialists are unable to say what the source of illumination or inspiration is, but to those who believe in divinity the source of such assistance is Almighty God, who in His infinite wisdom secures His assistance to every person according to his merits. Prayer is one of the means for obtaining such merit and this is why Imam Zein ol-Abedin, the fourth Imam, beseeches God, and instructs us to do the same to help us so that when we express our views they are in accord with reality. 'O

١- Quoted, without source. in Morteza Mottahari Emdadha-ye Gheibi dar Zendegi-ye Ensan ('Divine assistance in human life') Tehran. p. ٨٠.

God! I seek refuge in thee from unadmitted prayer illusory hopes negated modesty failed reasoning and wrong judgment.(١)

Chapter ۵: Testing Belief

point

This chapter deals with another important question which must be examined before we embark on a discussion of ideology, namely the testing of belief.

Are there any criteria and standard by which a person can test the correctness of his

views and beliefs? How can a research know whether what he or others consider being a scientific fact or nation or theory is really based on science or is just pseudo-science or self-delusion. Do the Islamic texts have any guidance on the testing of ?belief or not

The answer is the both scientific and unscientific beliefs and the disease of self-delusion have signs and symptoms by which the researcher can test his opinions and .those of other people and thereby discover whether they are true or false

Imam Ali, in expounding the signs of scientific and unscientific belief, has a comprehensive and rather complex explanation, which is of great value and worthy of .detailed study

Signs Of Scientific Belief

point

First, let us see what the Imam has to say about the signs and indications of scientific :belief, then examine and analyze them one by one. Imam 'Ali's words are as follows

The truly wise person is he who knows that what he knows, compared with what he does not know, is slight. He therefore considers himself ignorant, and by recognizing his ignorance he exerts himself all the more to acquire knowledge. The truly wise person is thus always in search

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Mizan. Hadith No. ۶۸۴۳ -۱

of knowledge and interested in acquiring and utilizing information. He is humble towards men of learning, considers his own view suspect, practices silence. Is on his guard against error and is ashamed of he is wrong. If a proposition is put to him about whom he has no knowledge, he does not deny it, because he knows the extent of his ignorance.(۱)۱۲۴

The Imam's comments refer in all to seven points that indicate a truly wise person,

these are recognition of one's own ignorance, an increasing thirst for knowledge, humility towards the learned, skepticism of one's own judgment, helping silent, .caution against error and not denying what one does not know

.Let us examine each of these points

Recognition Of One's Own Ignorance

point

Unlike those who merely think they are wise and persons suffering from self-delusion, who only consider their own knowledge and are unaware of their ignorance, that truly wise and those with scientific opinions only consider their own ignorance and in view of its infinits extent do not consider their knowledge to be of any .significance

In 'Ali's view, such people are worthy to be called wise and learned and their views and opinions in intellectual problems are likely to be valid and reliable. 'The truly wise person is he who knows that what he knows, compared with what he does not know, .'is slight and therefore considers himself ignorant

The more truly wise person knows the more he realizes that his limited knowledge is .insignificant in comparison with the infinite extent of what he does not know

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Bihat Vol. ۷۷-PP ۲۲۱-۲, Mizan Hadith No ۱۳۶۴۱ -۱

Thus, a person who has embarked on the quest for scientific facts and opinions will realize that his knowledge is so slight and insignificant when seen against his .ignorance that it cannot be taken into account

He therefore not only refuses to consider himself with the little knowledge he does not to be worthy of the little wise and learned, but on a detailed. Scientific and realistic .evaluation of the case he numbers himself among the ignorant

The wiser a person is the greater he feels the gap to be between what he knows and what he does not know. In other words, as the level of his knowledge increases the unknown he encounters increases proportionately.

A person who has no proper understanding of human being feels there is nothing he does not know about the subject. If you ask an illiterate person "What is a human being?' he will reply: 'That's easy. A human being is a human being, and really that's a silly question! 'And if you ask him if there's anything he does not know about human beings he will say 'No, I think it's quite clear what human beings are, and there's no need to explain them!'

But if you ask someone, who has studied anthropology, the same question the more extensive or specialized his studies have been the less he will claim to know about this astonishing, complex and mysterious creature. The deeper he dives into the subject the more uncertainties he has about his knowledge.

For ignorant people

p: ۹۲

humans are an open book, but a scientific research such as Professor Carel, who spent a life-time in anthropological research, condensed his knowledge in a book entitled 'Man, the Unknown'.

For a real scientific it is not just man that is unknown every single creature and every single atom in the universe is complex, mysterious and unknown. A French scientific named Pilisti De Lamene is reported to have said: 'If anyone can defined a grain of sand I will show him the Almighty'.

And it is not just a grain of sand but the atoms that it is composed of still remain to be properly defined. For does not science every day discover new mysterious about the atom? And does not this indicate that science is still in capable of fully understanding a particle of particles of the universe?

For the really wise person, as opposed to the person who thinks he is wise, the whole

universe is therefore mysterious and complex and unknown, and the more he learns about it the more mysteries and complexities he becomes aware of, and hence the greater the number of question marks he is confronted with in his studies and the .more aware he is of his own ignorance

For this reason the greater a person's knowledge the less he finds that he knows! His knowledge is limited, but his ignorance is infinite. No number can quantify the gap, so, Imam 'Ali says the really wise person considers his knowledge to be so slight and insignificant that

p: ۹۳

it is not worthy of consideration and therefore he numbers himself among the .ignorant

And this explains the meaning of the words ascribed to Socrates: 'My knowledge has reached the point that I know I know nothing.' In similar vein Avicenna describes his own intellectual achievements in the following verse: 'Always asking and asking, but '.answer came there none splitting many a hair, but without knowing one

The fact that a truly learned person considers himself relatively speaking, ignorant is not confined to the likes of Socrates and Avicenna but as Imam 'Ali states this is one of the unconditional characteristics of the truly learned. Such persons are not .exceptions: true learning means simply that

We should note what the Imam says about his knowledge and then in comparing it with his ignorance. That great Imam, who could say: 'Ask me before it is too late and I am no longer with you'(۱) and 'I have knowledge of the past and the future,'(۲) that indescribably wise man, who could say: ' I have been to the depths of the ocean of secrete knowledge and have been so merged in it that if I appear as I am you are like a rope trembling in a deep well, losing your balance and shaking in your agitation' that great Imam, with his indescribably extensive and profound knowledge, which we do not even have the patience to hear about, considers his ignorance to be so great and his knowledge, in compares his own limited knowledge with

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۱- Mizan, Hadith No. ۱۷۰۵

۲- Ibid, No. ۱۰۶۸.

the infinite wisdom of God Almighty he calls himself an ignorant!

In the prayer known as Yastashir(۱), which Imam 'Ali tells us was taught to him by the Prophet of Islam with the advice that he should teach it to his successor and recite it every morning and every evening. God Almighty is addresses thus: ' Thou art All-knowing and I am ignorant, 'This is a precise scientific fact. 'Ali is not making a polite exaggerator and he is not overstating the case by a hair's breadth. What he says is the actual truth and not a lot more or less than the truth.

The Man Of Learning Knows His True Measure

This is an another expression of Imam 'Ali's in connection with the characteristics of the truly wise person as opposed to those who appear wise, who may at first sight seen to be the same. The Imam's words are as follows: 'The man of learning is he who knows his true measure and ignorance suffers for the person who does not know his measure.'(۲)

It is clear that by 'his true measure' the Imam means the measure of his knowledge, that is to say that the truly learned person is someone who has reached an understanding of the true measure of his wisdom by comparing his knowledge with his ignorance and is not troubled by pride or self-delusion. A person who has not reached this stage of self-knowledge and has not made the comparison between his knowledge and his ignorance is not worthy to be called learned, since despite

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۱- Mafatih-ol-Jinan.

۲- Ibid, No.۱۳۶۳۸.

all the knowledge he may have of various sciences his ignorance will be sufficient to

.lead him astray and invalidate his views and beliefs

An Increasing Thirst For Knowledge

When a scientist has learned the exact level of what he knows in comparison with what he does not know, and realizing how little it is, his soul becomes possessed with a thirst for knowledge, and a love of science leads him to increase his efforts to understand the truth of existence. As Imam 'Ali says: 'The learned man is he who is (never satiated with learning, and never claims to be satiated.'(١

In another tradition he says: 'The learned man is he who is never tired of acquiring (knowledge.'(٢

This is the exact opposite of people who only appear to be wise and are suffering from the disease of self-delusion, which prevents them from continuing their studies and does not let them investigate the thing they do not know. Instead they pretend to .know everything and therefore have no need to study further

There is a story of a new bride who did not know how to cook. Her mother-in-law wanted to teach her, but she was too proud to learn. Whatever her mother-in-law said she immediately replied, 'I know.' Her mother-in-law said,' For this quantity of rice you need this much water. 'The bride said, 'I know.' 'And you need this amount of salt, 'The bride said. 'I know.' 'And when the rice has reached such and such .'consistency you must drain it, 'The bride said, 'I know

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.Mizan Hadith No.١٣۶٣٩ -١

.Ibid No. ١٣۶۴٠ -٢

'.Finally the bride got angry and said, Everything you keep telling me I already know

Her mother-in-law was well aware that she could not cook properly, but that her pride would not let her learn. To break this pride she said 'And when you've done everything as I've said, and you've drained the rice, you must steam the rice with a

’.sun-dried brick over the pot. ‘The bride said 'I know that too

The bride then did everything as her mother-in-law had told her and when she came to steam the rice she put a sundried brick on top of it. A few minutes later when she came to serve the rice she found the brick had dissolved in the steam and the rice was .sludge of mud

When we hear this story of a proud bride we laughter at her ignorance and perhaps do not believe the story. But if we think back at incidents in our life and reconsider .certain views we have had find many similar incidents

We recall stories of people who considers themselves the epitome of wisdom and express their opinion on every kind of subject, ideological, political, cultural economic and social, and many of them are like the story of this new bride, and their opinions .are just like the way she cooked the rice

Humanity Towards The Learned

The third sign of the truly wise, as given by the Imam, is humility towards people of .learning

However wise a person may be, if he knows the extent of his knowledge as compared to

his ignorance he will not suffer from intellectual pride and consider only his own knowledge as important. Instead, he will have a high regard for the research and knowledge of others and will show humility towards them because of their knowledge. By contrast, the illusion wise, men who consider themselves wiser that all .other scholars, constantly belittle others in order to show themselves in a better light

These self-deluded people assume that if they show humility towards a scholar their own scientific worth is somehow diminished. They think that if they pay their respects to other scholars this detracts them from their own status in people's eyes, for they

claim that no-one is wiser than they are. They, therefore, find fault with every theory that any other scholars proposes, without basing their objections on valid criticism and research. Sometimes they even show their vanity for respecting knowledge and .the learned- i.e. themselves

When I was a theological student in Najaf a fellow-student suffered from this disease to such extent that he almost became insane. Things reached the stage where it was not possible to praise someone without his shouts of disapproval, coupled with lies in (praise of himself, rending the atmosphere of the madrasa!(١

Questioning One's Own

Continuing with the words of the Imam, the fourth sign of the truly wise is being .skeptical of one's own judgment

The truly wise person, who considers his ignorance to be infinite, never acquits his own judgment of the charger of error, but rather always regards it with suspicion, never

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١- A madrasa is an Islamic theological college

regarding his the theories as scientific and in accord with reality until they have been .conclusively prove

How many times there have been some ideas or hypothesis which for centuries was considered as reality and the correctness of which was never doubted, until as science progressed they were found to be wrong. The Ptolemaic system is one such (hypothesis, and in theoretical matters there have been many other similar cases.(١

Keeping Silent

The fifth sign of the truly wise person according to Imam 'Ali, is that he keeps silent. Since he knows that his knowledge is slight and his ignorance infinite, reason prevents .such a person from expressing his opinion on every topic that may arise

Shahid Thoni relates that a man appeared before Qasim bin Muhammad bin Abu Bakr, one of the foremost juists of Medina whose rulings were and still are respected by Muslims of all sects to ask him about a problem. Qasim listened to the question and replied 'I don't know.'

The man who asked the question was most surprised at this answer because he could not believe that such a great and famous Scholar as Qasim bin Muhammad did not know the answer. He concluded that Qasim's declining to answer must have another reason and saying he did not know was just an excuse. So he implored him to give his opinion saying 'I've come to you for an answer and I don't know anyone else that can help me.

Qasim saw that the man did not believe him when he said

۱- See 'Conditions for understanding' P.

he did not know, so he looked him straight in the eye and said, ' Do not judge by the length of my beard and the crowd of people around me! Do not think that because I look like one of the ‘ulema and have a reputation for knowledge and many followers I know everything. No, I swear to God that I don't know the answer to your question!'

One of the senior members of the Qureish claim who was present and he had heard the conversation between Qasim and the man said to the latter, 'Don't let Qasim bin Muhammad get away with it. ‘Then he said to Qasim, 'I swear to God I've never seen you in such brilliant from as I’ve seen you here today.' Qasim replied. 'By God, I'd rather you cut my tongue out than force me to express an opinion on something I don't know.'(۱)

Truly, a person who is not devoured by intellectual pride or afflicted by self-delusion is never prepared, to express an opinion about a matter that he is not knowledgeable about, and therefore instead of answering many of the questions put to him he keeps silent, and this is the reason for Imam ' Ali's profound remark, Saying “I don't know is

(half way to knowledge,'(۲

In his respect he differs from these who suffer from arrogance and self-delusion. Whatever you ask such people they reply without thinking twice. They are not only unscholarly, but sick, and, to use the words of Imam

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.Mizan Chapter, ۱۷۰۶. with additional comment by the author -۱

Ibid, Hadith ۲۹۵۲ -۲

Sadeq, even mad: “The person who replies to every question that is put to him is mad.'(۱)۱۳۵

Caution Against Error

The sixth sign of the truly wise, according to Imam ‘Ali, is their caution against error. A person who is not trapped in arrogance and knows the extent of his ignorance is always very careful when he wants to express an opinion lest he should make an error, and takes pains to bear in mind all the various aspects of the problem before .presenting his opinion

The wise person's tongue is always at the back of his reason, and never speaks in an ill-considered fashion lest what he says should prove to be wrong, unlike to person who suffers from pride and self-delusion who says the first thing that comes into his .head on every subject

Not Denying What One Does Not Know

The last sign of the truly wise who according to Imam 'Ali are worthy to be called persons of learning, is not denying matters which are unknown to them. ‘If a person is put to him about whom he has no knowledge, he does not deny it because he knows '.the extent of his ignorance

If a person does not suffer from intellectual pride, but considers his knowledge to be insignificant and his ignorance infinite, he never permits himself to deny something

.about which he has no knowledge

In the words of Avecinna ‘Consider everything you hear to be possible until a proof is ’.adduced that denies such possibility

It is an intellectual and scientific truth that a lack of knowledge about

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Ibid, No. ۸۰۶۶ -۱

a matter does not imply that it does not exist. There are countless things about which .man has no knowledge of, but they do exist

Is it not a fact that a thousand years ago man was not aware of the circulation of the blood and the movement of atoms and hundreds of other scientific facts that are today known and proved? Does the fact that they were not know in the past imply that they did not exist or were not true he knows that most of the facts of life are .matters about which man knows nothing

The Commander of the faithful in further remarks dealing with characteristics of real men of learning as opposed to the seemingly wise is quoted as saying: ‘Regarding what you do not know do not express an opinion, for verily the truth lies mainly in (what you deny.(۱

Although it is obvious, and every person of common sense knows that he is not entitled to deny something he has no knowledge of people who have fallen into the trap of intellectual pride and suffer from self-delusion do not seem to be aware of .this, and believe the opposite to be true

Further explanation of these points will be given in the discussion of the unscientific .opinions that now follows

Indications Of Unscientific Opinions

point

Unscientific opinions, just like scientific ones, can be tested and identified by reference to the characteristics of the people expressing them. In other words, the indications of unscientific opinions are the same as the characteristics of those who

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Nahjal-Balagha (Feizedition) Sermon No.۸۶.(Sobhi Saleh edition) Sermon No.۸۷. The -۱ .entire Sermons is relevant to the present discussion

imagine themselves to be wise and ignorant people who pretend to be wise, which are listed in the continuation of the words of Imam ‘Ali following his listing of the signs .of the truly wise

In this part of the Imam’s words we shall first discuss the text of the tradition and then examine separately each of the characteristics listed. The words of the Imam on :the subject of ignorant people who pretend to be wise are as follows

The truly ignorant person is he who considers himself knowledgeable in matters that‘ he does not understand and confines himself to his own opinions, and thus alienates himself from the truly wise, whom he constantly criticizes, finding fault with all those to whom he is opposed and considering matters that he does not understand to be irrelevant or misleading. When matters are proposed to him that are beyond his knowledge he denies them and calls them lies, and in his ignorance he exclaims (in a ”!tone that reveals his pride): “I don’t know that! I don’t think that is so

I don’t think that will result happen, whenever did such a thing happen before?!’Such remarks are the result of his believing his own opinions, and he little realizes how great his ignorance is. As a result of the false beliefs which have conquered his mind, and because of what he does not know, he is constantly increasing his ignorance and denying the truth. In his ignorance he acts stubbornly and his pride prevents him

.from acquiring knowledge

On the basis of his tradition the signs of unscientific belief and of pseudo-scholars, like the signs of scientific belief, are seven in number. They are in fact the counter points .of the first set of signs

These signs may be summarized as follows: lack of awareness of one's own ignorance, disregard for the opinions of others, alienation from person of learning, denigration one's adversaries, denying unknown facts, stubbornness in scientific .discussions and false pride preventing one from acquiring knowledge

.Let us examine each of these signs

Lack Of Awareness Of One's Own Ignorance

The first sign of people whose opinions are unscientific and whose self- delusion leads them to think themselves learned is that they are unaware of their ignorance and therefore display the scanty knowledge they have as if it were something great, so great in fact that they imagine themselves to be the epitome of wisdom, and is if nothing is hidden from them. So they think they are experts on every subject and permit themselves to give their opinion authoritatively about everything or, in today's .idiom' analyze every matter

However much they know or are familiar with various sciences, such people, in Imam 'Ali's view, are not only unworthy of the title of scholars but may justly be called true ignoramuses. 'The truly ignorant person is he who considers himself knowledgeable in matters that he does not understand.'(۱)This is because not knowing the extent of his knowledge has sucked him into the black abyss of ignorance, where no science can usefully shed its light on

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.Bihar Vol.۷۷.p,۲۲۲, Mizan, Hadith No.۲۸۴۷ -۱

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So one of the ways of testing opinions and deciding whether they are scientific or not

is to examine the person holding them to see whether or not he is afflicted with intellectual pride or self-delusion, whether he expresses opinion's on things he does .not know about, and finally to what extant he considers himself, wise

If a person considers himself to be infinitely wise he is really infinitely stupid, and thus' is the exact meaning of a hadith which both Shi'a and Sunni narrators tell of the (Prophet: 'If someone says he is learned he is ignorant.'(۱

The primary characteristic of the wise and perceptive is that they are free from all intellectual pride. Truly wise people realize from the first stages of learning that their knowledge is insignificant in comparison with that they do not know. It is therefore obvious that people suffering from intellectual pride and who think they are wise have not yet reached the first stage of knowledge. As the Commander of the faithful says: 'A person who claims to have reached the stages of learning is manifesting the final (stages of ignorance.'(۲

People of limited and shallow intellects who acquire a little knowledge, however slight that knowledge may be, acquiring with it intellectual pride and confuse their ignorance with the little learning that have, and therefore consider themselves to be !infinitely wise

There is a story of young man who wanted to be a student of theology. He began to read the Sharh Amsaleh (the first work of

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.Ibid, No. ۱۳۶۴۲ -۱
.Ibid, No. ۱۳۶۴۴ -۲

Arabic literature that theological students read). A few days later he memorized the ۱۴ forms of the Arabic verb. The poor fool was of such limited intelligence that he thought that this little learning was like a great weight in his breast! He measured his breast with his hand and conjugated the verb 'to beat' and said to himself in great surprise. 'How can my breast, only one or two spans wide, contain such vast

’?knowledge

This is the story of all who are afflicted by intellectual pride. The student succumbed to the disease in the first few stage of study, while others succumb to it at other .stages, sometimes years later

A person who knows literature well and is an expert in this field imagines that he understands everything and can express his opinion on any subject. Another person might be a mathematician and think that mathematics is the epitome of knowledge and that he therefore has the right to air his views on any ideological and social .matter

Another person might be a jurisprudent, another well-versed in religions principles, another in philosophy and yet another in Quranic exegesis, and so on, and each person, whatever his specialized field of study, if he suffers from intellectual pride and is not aware how little his knowledge is in comparison with his ignorance, he may compare the two and conclude that since he is a specialist in a certain subject and his views are correct it is impossible for his views in other matters

p: ۱۰۶

to be other than correct, and that therefore he is entitled to express his views on any .subject under the sun. The captain replied he had not

The grammarian said that in that case he had wasted half his life since someone who did not know grammar was condemned to a life of ignorance and if he wanted to make the second half of his life profitable he should certainly devote his time to the .study of grammar

The captain racked his brains, but could not think of a suitable answer to give this proud scholar. Soon after, a storm arose: the ship was pounded by mountainous waves and fling hither and thither until it was about to sink. The captain glanced at the grammarian and seeing he was in a great fright, decided the time was ripe to give him ’?a suitable reply. So he said to him: ‘Professor, do you know how to swim

The grammarian said he did not. The captain said, you've wasted your entire life then, '.since now swimming is your only hope of being saved

Scholars like this grammarian who are subject to intellectual pride are all too common, especially in ideology matters. Without studying or on the basis of a little superficial study they consider themselves to be expert jurisprudents, and express .their views on such matters without considering what their own field of study is

The Origins Of Ideological Differences

One of the most basic causes of the differences in matters of belief and ideology that prevail in the world is to

p: ١٠٧

be found right here that is, in the opinions displayed by unqualified people. An ignorant person who considers himself to be a man of learning expresses an opinion, and other ignorant people, without giving a thought to what that person's qualifications are but just considering him to be wise, adopt his op٠inion. As a result contrary beliefs and .ideologies become prevalent

In this connection there is a tradition of Imam 'Ali's which without exaggeration we' can say is a miracle of thought. It goes thus: 'If the ignorant would hold their tongues, (there would be no differences of opinion among people.'(١

In truth, if people, who do not know about a subject refrain from expressing the opinion on it, and no scholar air his views on matters outside his field of specialization, all the differences of opinion and belief that divide society would disappear, and .people's minds would converge at a common point

If in the Bazaar, theological colleges and universities ignorant people would keep quiet: if in politics, economics and sociology non-specialists would say nothing, if in matters of philosophy, jurisprudence, religious principles and Quranic exegesis unqualified people refrained from airing their views, and if in matters of ideology such people held their peace, the differences of opinion would be eradicated from human

.society

If we look at the world as it is today and as it has been throughout history, with dozens of different schools of thought, and hundreds of different opinions and thousands of different ideas and viewpoints, we see that

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.Ibid .No, ۴۸۵۳ -۱

anyone who can gather a few supporters for his ideas considers himself and ideologue and the leader of an organization or group with its particular ideology and beliefs. If we trace the origins of all these differences we arrive at the root stated by .Imam ‘Ali, that is to say the expression of opinions by ignorant and unqualified people

If experts in various fields were to make the decision not to express their opinion until such time as a particular matter were conclusively proved and not to call unproven hypotheses scientific theories, then differences of opinion would undoubtedly be eradicated from society and all ideas relating to the facts of existence would converge at a common point, since there is only one truth and there cannot be more than one. Out of all these contradictory theories, opposing ideologies and conflicting opinions inevitably one is correct and scientific and in accord with realty and the rest are incorrect, unscientific and not in accord with realty. It is not possible for you and me and a third party all to be right if our theories are at odds with each other and each of .us has his own particular view

Disregard For The Opinions Of Others

The second sign of a person whose opinions are unscientific is that he has no respect for the thoughts and research of others and disregards their opinions, or as the ’.Imam, puts it, ‘limits himself to his own opinions

So another way of testing opinion is to examine the person holding it to see whether

he studies the views and opinions of others or whether he believes that everything he .says is right and everything others say is wrong

A person afflicted with the disease of self-delusion considers himself to be the epitome of wisdom and therefore sees no need to study the opinions of others. But a person who does not suffers from this disease and knows that his knowledge is limited and his ignorance infinite admits to the possibility that others may have a correct understanding of ------------------------------ --------------himself to his [own opinion but ----------------------- [Part unreadable in the printed text

In another tradition the Imam says: 'Only an ignorant person admires his own (opinion.'(1

Alienation From Persons Of Learning

The third sign of a person whose views and opinions are unscientific is that he alienates himself from real scientists and scholars. Like a moth that shuns the sunlight and prefers the darkness of the crypt; these creatures in human form shun the light of knowledge and avoid the company of true scientists, never permitting themselves to emerge from their darkening places into the board daylight of science and knowledge. As the Imam says: 'The ignorant person...alienates himself from the truly '.wise, whom he constantly criticizes and finds fault with

The pseudo-wise are always finding fault from a distance with the views and opinions of scholars. They do not criticize constructively but merely cavil. A person who's afflicted with the disease of self-delusion is not prepared to sit down with a scholar and discuss matters or allow his views and opinions to

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.Ibid, No. ۶۸۵۹ -۱

.be subjected to scrutiny

He proclaims his theories about origins of life or life after death, or about economics,

or politics, or social justice, or about how the country should be run or other matters, and thinks that his theories are the only correct ones, what he says or what his party or group or organization says is right, and what others say is wrong. If his views or those of his organization or group are not generally accepted, he withdraws from society and criticized and cavils from a distance, and if he can, he even imposes his unscientific theories on society by force of arms! (1)

This is what the counter-revolutionary groups of our society did, and recently the leaders of the treacherous Tudeh Party have confessed to this.

Denigrating One's Adversaries

Another indication that a person is suffering from self-delusion is that he denigrates all who are opposed to his views and beliefs. In other words, a person who falsely imagines that he is wise thinks that he holds the key to correct intellectual belief and therefore supposes that others, if they want to avoid falling into error, should think as he does and hence arrive at the same conclusions as has, and if they fail to do so their views and beliefs are wrong and misleading.

Denying Unknown Facts

The fifth sign of a person whose opinions are unscientific is that he denies facts which are not known to him. As the Imam says: 'When matters are proposed to (the ignorant person) that are beyond his knowledge

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١- Everybody knows that soon after the victory of the revolution, the officials of the Islamic Republic invited various specialists in ideological and social fields to take an open television discussion and person their views for the public to judge. The Monafiqin 'hypocrites as supporters of the banned Mojahedin Khalq Organization are called), Fedayin and Tudeh (communist) Party were invited. Everybody saw that when after a few sessions of such discussions, these groups realized they were being made to look foolish they refused to take further part, and decided instead to resort to force

of arms to prove the correctness of their theories, as they had of course intended to resort to force of arms prove the correctness of their theories, as they had of course intended to do from the first!

he denies them and calls them lies, and in his ignorance he exclaims (in a tone that reveals his pride): "I don't know that' I don't think that is so! I don't think that will happen. When ever did such a thing happen before?!'

Such remarks are the result of his believing his own opinions; he little realizes how great his ignorance is. In other tradition the Imam is reported as saying: 'Do not reject everything that people say, for such a course is sufficient to prove your ignorance.'(۱)

For example, if a thousand years ago a person suffering from the disease of self-delusion had been told that minute living organisms, invisible to the ordinary eye were the cause of physical illnesses, or that blood circulated in the body and if this circulation ceased, death would occur, or that if matter were split in the smallest particles, which would later be called atoms, electrons revolved at fantastic speed around protons, and that man would use atoms to make destructive weapons capable of destroying life on earth in a few seconds, that person would undoubtedly have denied such statements, and consider them superstition and fantasy.

He would probably have claimed that if such things existed he would certainly be aware of them and since this was not the case anyone claiming that such things existed must be a liar, whose views were unscientific and contrary to reality!

It so happens that history has recorded examples of such persons. More than twelve centuries ago

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۱- Mizan Hadith No. ۲۸۶۶

in the time of Imam Sadeq, a person suffering from this intellectual disease by the name of Abu Shaker was discussing religious matters with the Imam. During their

discussion the Imam said: 'You deny the existence of a God you cannot see. But can ?you see inside your own body

Abu Shaker replied 'No'. The Imam said, 'If you could see inside your body you !wouldn't say that because one can't see God. Hence, belief in His existence is a fiction

The Imam said. 'Do you say that a thing which cannot be seen, that makes a sound that cannot be heard, and that cannot be touched or smelled or tasted does not exist, and since it does not exist it is not be worshipped? Abu Shaker said. 'Yes, that's what I .say

The Imam said. 'Do you hear the sound of your blood circulating in your body? Abu Shaker said. 'No, but does blood circulate in the body? The Imam said. 'Yes, it does. Can you smell the blood as it circulates?' Abu Shaker said. 'No'. The Imam said. 'Every few minutes your blood circulates throughout your body, and if this circulation stopped for even a few minutes you would die. Abu shaker said. 'I can't accept that the blood in my body circulates. The Imam said. 'What prevents you from accepting the fact that your blood circulates, is your ignorance, and it is this ignorance thus prevents you from accepting God.' 'Are you aware of the existence of creature which God

created and put to work in your body and as a result of their activity you are alive?" '.Abu Shakar said, No

The Imam said, 'Since you only believe in what you can see you cannot be aware of the existence of these creatures. If you become a man of science you will know that in your body there are as many living creatures as there are grains of sand in the desert. They are born in your body, grow there, reproduce, and after a time die, but you don't see them or hear them and you can't touch them or smell them or taste them. They '!are born, grow and die so that you can live

You imagine that your denial of the existence of living and knowledge, whereas this'

denial is really based on ignorance. Do you see the stone set at the base of this? You probably consider it to be motionless, because your eye can not see its movement, and if anyone tells you that in this stone there are movements which compared with the movements of us who are gathered together here are like complete immobility, you wouldn't believe him. You'd say he is making up a story. You'd consider yourself to be an intelligent person, unaware of the fact that because you are ignorant you cannot perceive the movement inside this stone. But perhaps one day as a result of the progress of science people will be able to see the movements inside stone'.(۱)

As you can

۱- That day has finally arrived See 'Monazareh' (The Debate)by the author, (Debate no.۲). (Debate No.۱) is also relevant to the present discussion.

see, all the characteristics of the pseudo-wise and all the symptoms of these afflicted by self-delusion are untitled in Abu Shaker.

When we read the story of the debate between Abu Shaker and Imam Sadeq, which took place more than twelve centuries ago, we are filled with amazement. Even people who are suffering from self-delusion are amazed that Abu Shaker denied the circulation of the blood, the existence of micro-organism in the body and atomic movement with such certainly, and did not consider the possibility that perhaps one day science would prove these phenomena to be true.

But we must take note that even today there are many Abu Shakers about, persons who deny the existence of angels, spirits and in general everything metaphysical without relying on any scientific proof simply because our senses are incapable of perceiving what is not material. They refuse to accept as true anything in the sphere of metaphysics. Such people are the Abu Shakers of our age, and like him are suffering from the intellectual disease of self-delusion. In the words of the Imam: "Such remarks are the result of(the ignorant person) believing own opinions, and he little realizes how great his ignorance is."

In other words, people who deny facts which are unknown to them as a result of their disease of self-delusion, if they did but know how ignorant they are, and how insignificant their knowledge is in comparison with their ignorance, would never place such faith in their now views opinions and would not

.deny things that they do not know

Continuing his remarks about the serious effects of this dangerous disease, the Imam Says: As a result, of the false beliefs which have conquered his mind, and because of what he does not know, (the ignorant person) is constantly increasing his ignorance '.denying the truth

The most dangerous effect of self-delusion is that not only is the sufferer kept in a state of ignorance but his ignorance increases daily; his compound ignorance expands because as the disease becomes more severe new forms of ignorance, assail him in the guide of knowledge, thus making it progressively more difficult for .him to be cured

Stubbornness In Scientific Discussions

The six sign of a person whose views and opinions are unscientific is that in scientific discussion he is extremely stubborn. A person suffering from this disease cannot believe that the person he is confronted with may be speaking something correct. In discussions and debates he therefore tries to impose his views not with reason and proof but with arrogance and stubbornness, and to force the other party to accept .them

Pride Preventing One From Acquiring Knowledge

The seventh sign of a person whose views and opinions are unscientific is pride. As ',the Imam says: 'His pride him from acquiring knowledge

A person who considers himself so knowledgeable that the does not see his own

ignorance, pays no need to the opinion of others, alienates himself from scientists and denigrates all who disagree with him and tries to proof his opinions stubbornly, cannot possibly be a real student or researcher. These characteristics

create pride and arrogance in him and prevent the truth him from ever understanding .the truth of existence

Chapter ۶: Freedom of Opinion

point

One of the most important and relevant problems in today's world, especially since the publication of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is the problem of .freedom of opinion

Article ۱۸ of the International Convention on Civil and Political rights states that: Everyone has the right of freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in .teaching, practice, worship and observance

While Article ۱۹ states that: this right includes freedom to hold opinions without reference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media .and regardless of frontiers

In this chapter we will examine freedom of opinion from the view point both of reason and Islam, and then explain why this question is so much promoted in today's world. But first we must consider three questions as an introduction to the subject. These are: the meaning of opinion, the sources of opinion and the meaning of freedom of .opinion

The Meaning Of Opinion

As we saw in some detail in chapter I the world for opinion in Arabic and Persian

(aqideh) is derived from the verbal root 'adq', meaning to tie or knot. When a view is 'tied' to person's believes, rightly or wrongly, correctly or incorrectly, in accord or at odds with reality, to the benefit or

.harm of himself and society-is called an opinion

Sources Of Opinion

From where do a person's opinion and beliefs, which are the basis of his actions and positions he adopts, originate? This question is extremely important, since it must be answer before we study the problem of freedom of opinion. If we have the answer to .this question it will be easier to express an opinion about freedom of opinion

With a little reflection it becomes clear that a person's opinions and beliefs originate :from these two sources

a) research

b) Taqlid

Sometimes a person arrives at a view or opinion about a question by independent thought and by study and research. For example, he concludes from his researches that the earth goes round the sun or that the sun goes round the earth that something other than material objects exists or does not exist, and so on. In such a case the source of his opinion is research, regardless of his theory being in accord .with reality or not

And sometimes a person's opinions and beliefs are not the product of research and study with an open mind: either he has accepted an opinion without carrying out research or, if he has reached his beliefs while his mind was captive to Taqlid. The roots of a person's opinions are therefore either research or Taqlid. There is of course a third source, which consists of inspiration or enlightenment, but since this source is not general, but only to be found in exceptional persons, we will exclude it from the

(present discussion.(۱

It is worth nothing that a close study of the matter reveals that people's opinions and beliefs are not as a rule based on thought and research, but on Taqlid. One’s parents, clan or tribe, social environment party organization or group, the personalities one admire, all these are the source of inspiration for one’s views. Without demanding reason or proof, but purely on the basis of Taqlid, people accept those views and gradually become accustomed to them until they are ‘tied’ to their minds and become .appendices to them, firmly established in their very souls as their own opinions

For this reasons people’s family and social environment play a fundamental role in the formulation of their opinions. Whatever family and environment a person lives in, he usually adopts the opinions and views if individuals in that family or environment, and to tell the truth, therefore are few people who have acquired their opinions and .beliefs entirely by means of personal investigation

This is why the Quran warns people that if they follow the opinions of most people in :the world they will be led astray, since such beliefs lack any scientific basis

If you were to obey the majority of mankind they would lead you astray from God’s‘ .(path. They follow nothing but idle speculation and guess’ (۶:۱۱۶

Freedom Of Opinion

Before discussing freedom of opinion we must specify what we mean by such freedom, because until its meaning is clarified we cannot judge whether it is right or wrong. Freedom of opinion may be

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۱- It is discussed in a later chapter entitled “Understanding with the Heart”.

:interpreted in three ways

.a) Freedom to choose one's opinions, i.e. the freedom to believe whatever one likes

.b) Freedom of expression, i.e. the freedom to express whatever on believes

c) Freedom to propagate opinion, i.e. the freedom to advocate and disseminate .whatever one likes

So when freedom of opinion is under discussion it is possible that any of these three .meanings, or all of them, may be meant

Now, having clarified the meaning of the word opinion, the sources of opinions and the many of freedom of opinion, let us see what our reason has to say about freedom .of opinion

Freedom Of Opinion From The Point Of View Of Reason

point

Reason has a specific view about each of the three interpretations of the expression, freedom of opinion, and so we cannot give a single categorical judgment on the .matter, but must examine each of these interpretations separately

a) Freedom of choice in one's opinions

The first interpretation of freedom of opinion is the sense that a person is free to choose his own opinions, and to adopt any opinion he likes and to believe whatever .strikes his fancy

A little contemplation soon shows us that this kind of freedom of opinions is, in practice impossible; because a person's opinions and beliefs are not in his control, nor are they in the control of others. A person can neither believe whatever he wants, nor .can another person forcibly impose an opinion or belief on him

Opinions are not like garments that a person can put on, or change, as the fancy takes him, or that someone else can force him to wear. A person's beliefs

are like his loves. Love and friendship cannot be switched on at will, so that he can feel love for anyone or anything as he decides, nor is it in the power of anyone else to induce him to feel love for a person or thing, or not to feel it. If a person is convinced that it is daytime now, he cannot neither believe of his own accord that it is night-time, nor can anyone else force him to change his opinion. A person may be induced to say something against his opinion, but it is not possible for him to be induced to change his .opinion

In ١۶٣٢, Galileo wrote a book on the subject of the theories of Ptolemy and Copernicus. A year later the Pope summoned him to Rome and declared that his opinion that the earth moves around the sun was blasphemous. The Pope forced him to kneel down and recant his view. The story is well known that after Galileo had recanted he got up and left the room and then they noticed that he had written on the ground with his finger "Nevertheless, the earth does move."(١)

Only in one case can an opinion change and that is when the source of the opinion changes. If the source of the opinion was research it may be that research, in continuing his studies, will come across evidence proving that his earlier opinion was wrong, or if the source of his opinion was Taqlid it may be

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١- Mohammad Mo'in. Farhange Mo'in (Mo'in's Dictionary) Vol ۶. under 'Galileo'.

that the chain of Taqlid will be broken.(١)

b) Freedom of expression

The second sense in which the expression 'freedom of opinion' is used is the freedom to state or express one's opinion. From the point of view rights for a person to be able to say what his opinion is without being molested by anyone, just as everyone has the right to lead his private life as he wishes, provided of course that he does not disturb .others in doing so

The freedom to express one's opinion, apart from being the natural right of every

person, also promotes the exchange of ideas, the development of scientific beliefs and the correction of opinions. There is therefore the slightest doubt from the point of view of reason the validity and even the necessity of his freedom. There are two further aspects of the matter which deserve inspection, however. The first is whether a person has the right to express a view which is contrary to what he knows to be correct and contrary to his real beliefs. The second is whether or not from the point of view of reason a person has the duty to correct a fallacious opinion or a belief that is not based on though and research.

The answer to the first question must be that if is purely a question of the judgment of reason, however much reason may disapprove of a person expressing an opinion which is contrary to his real beliefs, to the extent his use of this freedom does not

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١ - Freedom to choose the source of opinion will be discussed in the next sense of the expression 'Freedom of opinion'.

harm others there is no justification in depriving him of it.

The answer to the question is that reason, while considering the expression of an opinion to be free, also considers it one's duty to endeavor to correct false opinions, for two reasons. The first is that opinion is the basis of action and superstition and false beliefs can lead society to corruption and perdition. The second reason is that to campaign against superstition is a step towards freedom of thought, and reason cannot ignore its obligation to promote such freedom.

It should also be borne in mind that freedom of opinion and freedom of thought are fundamentally opposed to each other: opinion and thought cannot both be free, because as we have already explained opinion is something which is 'tied' onto a person's mind, forming a knot there and becoming an appendix to his very soul.

So if a person's beliefs are not based on thought and research they become chains which fetter his reason and soul, imprisoning his mind in walls of superstition and

preventing him from thinking freely or arriving at scientific beliefs that are in accord with reality. We must therefore choose between freedom of thought or the freedom to have superstitious opinions, and if we choose freedom of thought the campaign to break the chains of superstitious belief becomes a serious and essential matter.

Just as if a person who is bound fast in chains and cannot free himself single-handed needs the help of someone who is

free so mind that is bound fast in the chains of fallacious beliefs, and encircled by incorrect opinions cannot free itself from the bondage of incorrect beliefs, and someone else who is free is needed to break these chains and set him free.

From the point of view of reason therefore, it is incumbent on a person to correct the opinions of others, and by virtue of the fact that it is impossible to correct opinion by force or compulsion the appropriate measure consist of explaining matters so as to promote correct opinions, acquaint people with the true facts by means of logic and proof, and replacing Taqlid with research.

If, however, an individual or a group become obstacles to freedom of thought and the correction of opinion, logic and proof are ineffective, and in this case reason tells us that such obstacles must be forcibly destroy so as prepare the ground for the development of correct opinions and the collapse of false ones.

c) Freedom to propagate opinion

The third sense in which the expression ‘freedom of opinion’ can be interpreted is the freedom to propagate and promote opinions, and transmit them to others, whether such opinions are based on research or Taqlid whether they are in accord with reality or not, and whether they are beneficial or harmful to society.

When reason, according to what have been mentioned, considers it an obligation to fight superstition, it most certainly cannot justify absolute freedom to propagate opinion. How can reason accept the spreading of superstitious beliefs that have no

intellectual or scientific basis; ideas which imprison the mind and halt the growth of society, or even cause social retrogression and harm? Wrong and harmful beliefs are a kind of psychological sickness. Ideological diseases are more dangerous than physical ones: When does not permit an individual to spread the physical diseases that one may have in the society how can it justify the right to spread psychological ?diseases

Belief in Slavery

The inherent slave-like nature of the deprived classes is an opinion ascribed to Aristotle, who says in his book under the title of "Politics": 'Nature made slaves. Generally, the barbarians and people far from civilization were created for submission and services and the Greeks for commanding and freedom.'(۱)

Will Durant says: 'After the passage of several centuries slavery because a custom, and people regarded it as essential and innate: Aristotle considered it natural and unavoidable and St. Paul sanctified it and in his opinion it was a system in keeping with God's will.(۲)

Ernest Renan also confirms this opinion. He says: The West is the master-race and the East is the race of labors and this is why nature made the race of laborers greater in number'.(۳)

Burying Females Alive

According to Will Durant: 'In some places, such as New Guinea, New Hebrides, the Solomon Islands, Fiji and India, women were strangled and buried with their dead husbands and were expected to kill themselves so as to be able to serve their husbands in the next world'.(۴)

Infidels at the time of the Prophet of Islam believed that females were

.Quted in History of slavery. p.۳۵ -۱
.Durant, Will. History of civilization. Vol.۱.p.۳۳ -۲
.Durant, Will, History of civilization. Vol.۱.p.۳۳ -۳
Ibid.p.۵۳ -۴

.a cause for shame, and therefore buried their daughters alive

Belief in The Nutritional Qualities Of Blood

Will Durant, in discussing the general characteristics of civilization, after mentioning the various kinds of food eaten by primitive peoples, from louse-stew(۱) to human flesh (۲) writes of human blood as follow: 'Now for many tribes human blood is a delicious food. Many of tribal people who are pure and good sometimes drink human blood, either as a medicine or in completion of a row or a religious rite. They usually (believe that when they drink a person's blood his strength passes to the drinker.'(۳

These are examples of millions of superstition and false beliefs of various societies. If someone were to write a book about superstitious beliefs it would run to dozens of .volumes

Does reason permit these false and dangerous beliefs and similar, get even more dangerous beliefs, which imperialism today propagates for drinking the blood, eating ?the flesh and enslaving of man in modern from, to be freely transmitted

Islam And Freedom Of Opinion

So far we have been looking at freedom of opinion from the point of view of reason and, to summarize briefly, we have concluded that freedom of opinion in the sense of individual liberty to choose one's opinion is not a rational concept, and in the sense of a person's right to express his opinion it is one of his natural rights, and in the sense of the right to propagate superstitious and harmful beliefs and to transmit them to .society, it is strictly forbidden from the point of view of reason

Now

۱- Others eat the lice in each other's hair and when these numerous they cook them in stew, and if they have caught an enemy they eat him with shouts of joy. Ibid.p.۱۷

۲- 'To all of these kinds of foods man added a very tasty dish, the flesh of his fellow, man. It can be shown that cannibalism was once almost universal among primitive tribes. This custom was practiced by people until quite modern times, such as the Irish, Iberians Picts and even the Dares of the eleventh century. In New Britain, human flesh was hung up sold in butcher's shops, just like the flesh of other animals'Ibid.p.۱۸

۳- Ibid.p.۱۸-۱۹.

let us see what the Islamic attitude to freedom of opinion is. The short answer is that the Islamic attitude to freedom of opinion is the same as the rational attitude. The detailed answer requires an examination of the Islamic view on each of the three senses of freedom of opinion based on the available evidence.

As was explained in our examination of the rational attitude a person's beliefs are in principle outside his control in the sense that he can believe or disbelieve whatever he wishes. Opinions are not like garments that a person is free to choose or to change as the fancy takes him or that he can constrained to change against his will. Opinion is like love which can only change if the source itself changes.

Since opinion is not subject to choice, freedom of choice in this matter is not something that can be discussed in an Islamic context. This it was that when a number of nomadic Arabs of the tribe of Bani Asad came to the Prophet of Islam in a year of drought and professed their adherence to Islam(۱), but did not really accept Islamic beliefs and were motivated by materialistic considerations, the following Quranic verse was revealed:

'The nomadic Arab say they have found faith. Tell them they are not true believers. They should say they profess Islam, and true faith has not yet entered their hearts' ((۴۹:۱۴).

To profess Islam is to express one's adherence to Islamic beliefs, while faith is heart-felt belief

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.Commentary by Abu 'Ali' Ibn-al- Tabresi, Majm'a-ol-Bayan.Vol. ۹. ۱۳۸ -۱

in Islamic ideology.(۱) Expressing one's beliefs is within a person's power, but possession of true faith is not. A person may have various motivations for expressing his belief, but faith is a produce of the heart and can only be claimed when Islamic .beliefs have become an appendage of the soul

Freedom of Expression In Islam

A study of the Quran and the hadith, as well as of the history of Islam, shows that Islam officially recognizes the freedom to express one's opinions. Indeed, no other religion respects this kind of freedom to the extent that Islam does. Not only is the expression of opinion is free in Islam but the Quran advises people to listen to various different views and opinions and to examine and criticize them with an open mind, and when the investigation has revealed which are the soundest views to adopt them .as a basis of action

In other words, the guidance provided by the Quran is that a person should use freedom of expression as a means to promote the growth of sound opinion and to :enable the best opinions to be identify and adopted

Give good news to those of My servants who, listen to what is said and follow what is' .(best ', (۳۹:۱۷

Not only is the expression of opinion free in Islam, but individuals are free even to express views that are contrary to their real beliefs. Although Islam considers such conduct to be shameful, and punishable in the hereafter, it nevertheless never compels a person to confess to

(...See Mizan, Chapter ۲۵۵ (Al-Imam -۱

what he really considers to be true. In numerous verses the Quran specifically status that faith is not a matter for compulsion and the Prophet of God has no obligation to force people to faith.

What Is Faith?

Faith consists of a belief accompanied by confession and the action that such belief demands.(۱) Confessing Islam opinions without heart-felt belief is not faith,(۲) and heart-felt belief that is not accompanied by an overt confession is not faith. In this respect, although Pharaoh was convinced that Moses was speaking the truth and although he believed in his heart that Moses had a prophetic mission(۳) he cannot be considered a true believer because in his stubbornness and pride he would not confess to the unity of God and the prophetic mission of Mosses. But when he was on the point of drawing, in desperation he did make such a confession, and said: 'I express my faith that there is no god but the God which the Children of Israel believe in, and I am to be counted as one of the Muslims.' (yunis/۹۰)

Here, Pharaoh expresses his faith under compulsion. Earlier, he had believed in his heart, but now fear of drowning provokes him to making a spoken confession. So he becomes a believer, but out of desperation and compulsion. So we see that faith has two main pillars: belief from the heart and practical confession. The first pillar is not within a person's power to control, that is to say, he cannot believe or disbelieve anything he

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.Ibid, Chapter ۲۵۵ -۱

,Holy Quran:۴۹/۱۴ -۲

,Holy Quran:۲۷/۱۴ -۳

wishes as the fancy takes him, but the second pillar is within his control, that is, he can confess to what he believes and take action as these beliefs demand, and similarly he

.may fail to confess in practical terms to his beliefs

Heart-felt beliefs, which are the first pillar of faith, since they are not within a person's power to control, can likewise not be imposed, that is to say, his beliefs cannot compulsorily changed. But the second pillar of faith, which is practical confession. Since it is within a person's control, is subject to compulsion. Or in other words it is possible to force a person to make a practical confession of his beliefs or to act .against them

Once faith is defined we see that when we say it is not compulsory we are referring to the second pillar of faith, since the first pillar is not susceptible to compulsion. We mean that Islam does not force a person to confess to Islam beliefs without his believing them. On the contrary, as we discussed in detail in chapter ۲ and ۳ in relation to Taqlid as a basis of opinion and research, Islam does not accept that fundamental .beliefs should be acquired except through research and individual investigation

In other words, of someone says he believes that God created the universe and is the one God he should have his reason for believing this. If he says that Muhammad is the Prophet of God, he should know why. If

p: ۱۳۰

he says believes that, on the Day of resurrection man will be raised from the dead and his deeds will be examined, he should know reasons for this beliefs, or says that because his parents or teacher said so he too believes this, his beliefs are not .acceptable to Islam

In short, Islam says that fundamental beliefs must be researched and not based on Taqlid, and everybody must solve the basic problems of ideology for himself, and other people's comments have no use to him. Further, Islam does not compel a person, even to confess to what he believes, in other words, when we say that in the Islamic view faith is not compulsory we mean that not only does Islam not compel a person to confess to Islamic beliefs that he does not really possess, and not only is confession of beliefs based on Taqlid without research and reflection and knowledge

unacceptable, but even people who do believe the doctrines of Islam but for some reason do not admit to doing so are free to adopt such a course, and no Muslim has :right to force them to confess their beliefs. The Quran specifically states that

There shall be no compulsion in religion, since true guidance is now distinguishable‘ .(from error.’ (۲:۲۵۶

This verse, apart from categorically denying the imposition of religious beliefs by force leaves it to the discretion of the individual weather to confess publicly to what he knows to be true, and by doing so explains the reason

for this absence of compulsion. It first states that the acceptance of Islamic beliefs and the practical confession of them are not compulsory, and that people are free to accept or not accept Islam (‘There shall be no compulsion in religion’). Immediately after, it explains that the reason for this freedom is that the right path and the wrong .(’path have been clearly indicated (‘true guidance is now distinguishable from error

Religion is a program and a path to perfection for man to follow, and in order to do so he must either know the path so as to follow it freely and with conviction, or else he .must be taken by that path forcibly

In the Quranic view once the road to perfection has been defined there is no reason for religion to be compulsory. Rather, there is necessity for man to be free in choosing this road, since the desire for perfection is optional and man fulfill the philosophy of his creator only when he chooses the right road freely and of his own volition. So once the right road is defined, but man abuses this freedom and diverges from the road he knows to be right and chooses a road he knows to be wrong, there is no point in .exercising compulsion. Let him fail and afterwards learn what his punishment is

A point worth nothing, one which the author has not seen referred to by any other writer, is that since in this verse the freedom to accept Islam

is under discussion, that is to say 'true guidance is now distinguishable from error' it is obvious that this verse, and indeed all the Quranic verses dealing with compulsion refer to people who have been shown the difference between true guidance and error, and those who understand the truth of Islam and Islamic beliefs but for various .reasons are not prepared to confess to what they believe

Nevertheless, the Quran categorically states that none is entitled to force them to do so.Another verse that categorically denies the use of compulsion in the expression of :Islamic beliefs is the following

If you are Lord so willed He could have made all the people on earth believe in Him.' .(Would you therefore force faith on people?' (١٠:٩٩

With regard to the revelation of this verse Imam Reza relates that according to his ancestors, going back to Imam 'Ali some of the Prophet's companions proposed to him that if he forced some of the people under his authority to accept Islam the number of Muslims would increase and so would their military strength against the enemy. The Prophet replied: 'I cannot face God having made an innovation that I was (not commanded to make, and I am not a person who imposes his will on others.'(١

At this point God Almighty revealed this verse, saying in effect 'O Muhammad, if I had wanted to I could have forcibly converted everyone to Islam. This would be like people suddenly finding faith after death when they are

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Sheikh Sadug. Tawhid. PP. ٣٤١-٢. Mizan hadith No. ١٧٤٩۶ -١

suffering punishment for their evil deeds. If I did this with them they would not be worthy of my rewards and praise. I want them to find faith freely and without '.compulsion

In short, the explanation of this verse, in the light of the circumstances in which it was revealed is this: in the system of creation man has been created as a free being,

capable of choosing between perfection and corruption, so that reward and punishment in the after-life have a justification: so the imposition of faith on an individual, since it is against the philosophy of man's creation is not permissible, and the Prophet of GOD is not entitled to do something which is against the tradition of creation and contrary to the divine will, even though such a deed might strengthen .the Islamic government and weaken the enemies of Islam

The third instance of a Quranic verse which specifically rejects the imposition of faith :is this verse, addressed directly to the Prophet

So give them warning. Verily your duty is only to admonish you are not their custodian. .((۸۸-۲۲-۳

In other words, the function of the Prophet is to warn and explain, to communicate the divine message and show the true path, and it is the people themselves who must make their choice and choose the true path. The Prophet was not appointed by God to a position of supremacy over the people so as to impose faith on them forcibly. The prophet's mission is to expound opinion, not impose

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The fourth Quranic verse that explicitly condemns the imposition of Islamic doctrine is :also addressed directly to the Prophet

You shall not use force on them; rather, use this Quran to warn those who fear My' .(threats.' (۵۰:۴۵

These verses tell us that the Prophet of Islam was extremely sad when he saw how his contemporaries were trapped by harmful and superstitious beliefs. He wanted by whatever means, to free them from these chains, so when he realizes that his constant efforts to free a considerable number of them were of no avail the grief in his soul knew no bounds, and his body could not cope with such distress, so that God was obliged to find a way of reducing his grief, the cause of which was his compassion

.towards the people

The verses quoted are therefore a kind of consolation to the Prophet, telling him that his duty is to pass on the divine message and to warn the people and not to impose faith on them by force. He has done his duty, God tells him, he has not failed, and if God wished people to become true believers coercion. He would have acted in a different way. What we infer from these verses is expounded more clearly in another :verse

You will perhaps kill yourself by worrying about their lack of faith. If We wished, We ‘ could reveal to them a sign from heaven and they would be forced into utter .(humility.’(۲۶:۳-۴

:And another verse tells us

You may‘

p: ۱۳۵

destroy yourself on their account, worrying why they do not believe this new revelation. We have beautified the earth so as to test them and see who acquits .‘himself best

.(۱۸:۶-۷)

These last two verses tell us clearly that the Prophet of Islam was so distressed at the way in which people were enslaved by superstitious beliefs, yet reluctant to accept correct ones, that sometimes there was the very real danger of him dying of grief. It is worth nothing that to comfort the Prophet the first of these quotations(۱) states that faith cannot be subjected to force, and the second(۲) alludes to the philosophy of .freedom, namely the testing and perfection of man

The Campaign Against Superstition In Islam

It may be that from what has been said about freedom of opinion and freedom to express one’s opinion in Islam the conclusion is drawn that Islam does not prescribe

any measure to combat superstition or correct wrong beliefs. Since if a person's opinions are not his to control and everyone is free to state his beliefs, and the imposition of faith even on persons who have recognized its truth is not permissible, .any such measures would be pointless

But a moment's thought shows that such a conclusion is false, because the fact the opinion is not discretionary is not incompatible with the possibility of correcting wrong opinions, and freedom of expression does not preclude a basic campaign against .superstitious beliefs, and indeed it is a prelude to such a campaign

Although Islam confirms freedom of expression as part of the

.Quran, ۲۶:۳-۴ -۱

.Quran, ۱۸:۶-۷ -۲

evolution towards the perfection of man it also considers a campaign against superstition so as free the mind from the bondage of incorrect beliefs, to be obligatory, and presages ultimate victory in this campaign Islam, is confident that the day will one day come when human society is freed from such bondage that is the day (when Islam rules the whole world.(۱

The justification of the campaign against incorrect opinions, in the Islamic view, is that reason considers it obligatory, just as the method proposed by Islam for the correction of beliefs is precisely the same as that which is proposed by reason. Islam cannot permit that because of wrong and unrealistic opinions, a person's real inner beliefs, which form the basis of all his actions, should be unscientific and false, and .that if such is the case the situation should remain so

Islam cannot permit that opinions which are contrary to reason, should fatter a person's mind, or grapple on to his a very soul or that if his mind remain in the .bondage of superstitious beliefs

The Islamic Way of Dealing with Superstition

As has already been mentioned, the method selected by Islam for dealing with superstitious beliefs is the same as that which reason suggests. To clarify things further, the Islamic approach to the correction of belief may be divided into two parts. The first is the Islamic way of ridding people's minds of incorrect opinions, and the second is the Islamic way of confronting obstacles to freedom of expression, and encouraging the growth of correct beliefs

p: ١٣٧

.Quran, ۴٨:٢٨ -١

.in society

With regard to the first part the Islamic, way is a publicity campaign and with regard .to the second part it is an armed campaign

Publicity Campaign Against Superstition

point

The Islamic way of dealing with superstition eliminating incorrect beliefs from people' s minds and encouraging them to adopt correct opinions and beliefs that are in accord with reality consists in the first instance of reliance on reason and proof, advice and .exhortation, debate and free discussion, in other words a publicity campaign

Call people to the path of your Lord with wisdom and kindly exhortation. Dispute with' .(them in the most courteous manner.' (١۶:١٢۵

In this verse the Quran proposes logical methods of ridding people's minds of superstitious beliefs, and instructs the Prophet to use these methods to invite them to .adopt Islamic opinions

:These methods are the following

Wisdom .١

The first practical method proposed by Islam in confronting incorrect opinions is reliance on reason and proof, rational argument, or as the Quran puts it 'The wisdom' .((al-hikma

The meaning of al-hikma, as defined by the 'Mufradat of Raghib' as the acquisition of truth by means of science and intellect. In other words the discovery of the truth through scientific and intellectual reasoning. Islam in every case relies on proof to)substantiate its claims and demands its opponents to produce proofs for theirs.(١

Exhortation .٢

The second practical Islamic method of dealing with superstitious beliefs, besides reason and proof, is exhortation and counsel. Exhortation consists of two words of warning and instruction which is to be stimulate the emotionally to accept the

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.Show us your proof(٢:١١٢:٢٧:۶۴;٢٨:٧۵) A famous dictionary of Quranic words -١

truth. Thus wisdom, through the intellect and exhortation through the emotions and .inmost feelings call upon a person to break the ties of incorrect belief

A point worth nothing is that in the Quranic verse quoted above 'exhortation', is qualified by the epithet 'kindly'. This is a reference to the fact that exhortation and counsel are only effective in motivating a person's emotions and feelings to accept the truth if they are free from all adverse qualities, such as harshness, superiority or contempt, and instead are accompanied by various beauties, such as eloquence, a sympathetic attitude, purity of motivation and even the physical appearance of the person giving the exhortation or advice, all of which help to reinforce his message. Most important of all is the necessity for that person to set a good example himself, for the worst kind of exhortation comes from someone who does not practice what he .preaches

Finally, the more admirable and attractive the exhortation is presented the greater will be the effect on the listener, for it frequently happens that the effect of good

advice in encouraging ordinary people to adopt sound beliefs and courses of action is greater than the effect of logical arguments and proofs.

Conversely, unattractive exhortation or 'sermonizing' is not only ineffective, but can sometimes have a reverse effect and cause a person to reject what he may have accepted through logic and proof, a Persian poem says:

The way in which you recite the Quran-

Being Muslim is not going to be popular around.

۳. Debate

The

p: ۱۳۹

third practical Islamic way of dealing with unscientific opinions, in addition to the methods already mentioned, is debate and free discussion. The Quran makes mentioned of this method, using the terms jedal and mera (dispute and controversy).

Debate in this sense consists of discussion in the form of a dispute or competition, in other words kind of wrestling –match between ideas. The Quran has two different approaches for the healthy confirmation of ideas in debate that lead to the clarification of the truth and the development of correct beliefs. The first one is the expression which is translated above as 'disputing in the most courteous manner' and the second is what is 'controversy'.(۱)

Disputing with courtesy involves the use of the healthiest and kindest forms of debating so as to clarify the truth, and obvious appearance involves the use of proofs so decisive that they are obvious to everyone, learning the other side without an adequate rejoinder.

Islam, which is the religion of all the divinely-inspired prophets, is the founder of free discussion and the healthy confrontation of ideas. The Prophet of Islam, as the bearer of the greatest divine message, in an age when victory and defeat were matters of

sheer power and wealth, was the first to introduce such concepts into that society. Both he and the learned members of his family were pioneers in this field and that is why a considerable proportion of the collections of hadith are devoted to debates conducted by the Prophet and the Imams of

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Quran:Kahf,۲۲ -۱

(his family.(۱

It is worthy to note that the Islamic method of ridding people's mind of unscientific opinions is completely scientific and logical, and in this regard Islam has entirely refrained from the use of military strength. The method adopted by the Prophet of Islam in his mission, in conformity with the commandments of the Quran, relied on reason proof, good advice and the use of the best and 'healthiest methods' of debate and free discussion. He specifically states that his method and that of anyone claiming .to follow him is to invite people to god on the basis of insight, vision and, awareness

Say "This is my path, I call on the people to have faith in God, on the basis of insight,' .(and so do my "followers," (۱۲:۱۰۸

It is therefore the height of injustice to say that Islam has ever imposed itself by force, especially since such claims have been made by people whose crimes in the Inquisition are a shameful chapter of in the history of their times. Islam does indeed use military force, not to impose its doctrines; but to remove obstacles that the .development of correct beliefs

The Struggle For The Liberation Of Thought

If reasoning and proof debate and exhortation all fail to give satisfactory results the Islamic way of confronting obstacles that are blocking the road to freedom of thought (is armed struggle and war.(۲

Obstacles to freedom of thought consist if regimes and false traditions that deprive

the people of power, thought discernment and hence prevent them from adopting .correct opinions

Corrupt, dictatorial

This subject will be covered more fully in a later Chapter" The scientific - ۱ ".understanding of the Prophet

.See-Darsi bozorg va arzandeh (An Important and instructive lesson.) p. ۲۲ -۲

and unjust regimes and powers that are nourished by the ignorance of the masses, and that will collapse if the public becomes known. Such regimes are therefore an .obstacle to correct beliefs, or as the Quran put it, an obstacle on the path of God

After having made the conditions clear and the discussion completed Islam confronts such regimes with force so as to remove the obstacles to freedom or through and .prepare the way for the growth of correct opinion through enlightenment

In the discussion entitled 'The Prophethood' on understanding the Prophet of Islam and the way in which he dealt with his opponents we shall see that in confronting hostile powers he first of all used debating tactics and relied on reason and proof, and at the second stage he resorted to mobahilah a traditions Arab practice of calling on the creator to act as arbitrator in a dispute, and if neither of these methods proved effective, he considered warfare and battle as ways of breaking the obstacles to awareness and freedom of thought. Debate and mobahileh were final words of the .Prophet's against the powers that were opposed to him

In addition to corrupt regimes, traditions affecting a society can be an obstacle to freedom of thought. If a person is endowed with freedom of thought a moment's reflection will tell him without the slightest doubt that idolatry, such as the worship of claves or fire, and dozens are even hundreds of other irrational beliefs are pure superstition. But false

traditions and customs which have embedded themselves in the heart and soul of those who believe in them are veritable chains fettering the mind and preventing a .person from thinking logically. In the words of Shahid Ostad ‘Alameh Mottahari

First there are greedy and exploitative people who want to establish a regime for themselves. This regime needs an ideological base, for without such a base nothing can be done. The person who established this base is well aware of what he is doing. His treachery is deliberate. He chooses an object, an idol, a bull, a dragon, and gives it extensive publicity. The public are hood winked. Perhaps at first people don’t pay a great deal of attention to it, but then after a few years their example. Generation follows generation and the cult becomes established, as a historical event, and becomes part of the national heritage, one of their national traditions and a matter of great pride, which cannot be abolished. It’s just like plaster. When plaster is first mixed with water it’s a gooly substance and you can mould it into any shape you like. But when it has been moulded into its final shape and begins to dry, the more it dries the larger it becomes hard, until in the end it becomes too hard that you cannot even .break it with a pickaxe

Ought we to fight against such cults? In other words, this freedom of through that we‘ ?say should have should it include opinions like this

.The world today is in the grip of a fallacy here

They say people’s minds should be free, and they say opinions should be free; idolatry in their opinion should also be free. People should be free to worship a cult or a dragon; everyone should be free to worship what they want, and to choose anything they want for their beliefs, whereas in fact these beliefs run counter to freedom of thought. Its opinions like these that tie a person’s mind up in knots.’(۱)

Islam says that the chain of superstitious beliefs which fetters the mind and which

cannot be unlocked by reason and proof, and exhortation and counsel, must be opened by military force, and that the obstacle consisting of false traditions, which over the years and over the centuries have sedated up society's mind with the sediment of erroneous culture until it has become so hard that it cannot be removed with ordinary implements, must be destroyed in a mighty explosion so as liberate .men's minds

Since direct military action against opinion is as we have seen, impossible, Islam begins its battle against false traditions by campaigning against their social manifestations. For example, in the campaign against idolatry the idol-temples must be destroyed, as Abraham did, and in the campaign against calf-worship the golden .calf must be melted down by fire, as Moses did

Abraham was the only person in his society to discover the secret of existence through independent thought and thus reach a correct philosophy of life.(۲) Faced

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Text of lecture given by the martyred Ostad at the Hoseiniyeh Ershad, in Tehran in -۱ the autumn of ۱۹۶۹ entitled-freedom of opinion", Published in collection of essays ....entitled "About the Islamic Republic

This was showed Abraham the kingdom of heavens of the earth, so that they might -۲ .(have certain faith. (۶:۷۵

with a people who were bogged `down in superstition and false beliefs, and who lacked the basic ability to think for themselves. Abraham tried as hard as he could, using reason and proof and advice, to make them see the error of their ways and to free their minds from the bonds of false beliefs, but without success. The more he admonished them the less effect it had. Finally, he came to the conclusion that he should prove to them in a practical way that these idols, which they had fashioned .themselves, could not be true gods

On day when the people were celebrating festival by going out into the country, Abraham decided to carry out his plan. He went to the main idol, then hung his axe

round the idol's neck and left. Abraham's plan was to stage a scene in which he would accuse the chief idol of massacring the other idols so as to eliminate false beliefs from people's thoughts and set their minds at liberty. When the people came back to the town from their festival they discovered that the idols had quarreled and killed each other. All the idols were broken except the chief idol, which had an axe round its neck.

It looked as if the chief idol was responsible for the carnage but their native wit told them it was impossible for a collection of inanimate objects to quarrel among themselves. So they immediately set about looking for the person who was really responsible. Since

Abraham had always been complaining about their idolatry and had also threatened to destroy the idols they their idolatry and had also threatened to destroy the idols they summoned him on charges of having killed their Gods and began to interrogate him in public.

The first question was: 'Did you do this to our gods?' In order to stir their consciences Abraham replied by saying that the seen indicated that the chief idol had done the killing and if idols could talk why didn't they asked the idols themselves what had happened?

The way was gradually being prepared for them to free their minds and think independently, Abraham's answer made the idolaters stop and think, and to realize how wrong they were in their beliefs. In their hearts they blamed themselves for this ideological tyranny and finally they had to confess that their gods could not talk. With their superstitious beliefs thus weakened and the obstacle of false traditions broken, Abraham saw his way clear to begin an appropriate publicity campaign.

He said: 'Would you worship, rather than God that which can neither help you nor harm you? Shame on you and your false gods! Have you no minds to think with?' ((۲۱:۶۶-۶۷

It is worth nothing that when Islam has broken the obstacle and freed the mind from the captivity of false beliefs it says 'Now think! See .what your reason tells you. If it tells you that Islam is right, then accepts Islam, and if it tells you some other religion

or ideology is right, then accept that. In other words Islam does not break open one chain with military force in order to fetter the mind with another chain, or even to impose another belief founded on reason and thought. On the contrary, when Islam has freed a person from erroneous beliefs it says, 'Think, and choose a belief on the basis of thought and research. Even if you choose Islam without thinking, this is not .acceptable

After the conquest of Mecca when the worship of old traditions was broken and amnesty had been declared, the people of the Hejaz flocked to Islam. But the leaders of the idolaters, who had created innumerable difficulties for the Muslim, felt themselves in a dangerous position, and a number of them therefore fled Mecca. One .of those who because of his evil past decided to flee was Safwan bin Ummaya

Safwan bin Ummaya, apart from other serious crimes, had publicly hanged some' Muslims in Mecca in broad daylight, in revenge for the death of his father, Ummaya, who had been killed at the battle of Badr. Fearing punishment, he decided to leave the hijaz by ship. 'Omair ibn Wahab, one of the Prophet's attendants, requested that his faults be pardoned. The Prophet accepted his intercession and gave him the turban he was wearing when he entered Mecca as a sign of safe conduct. 'Amir went to .Jiddah with the turban and personally accompanied Safwan back to Mecca

When the prophet saw this arch-criminal of the

age he told him with great magnanimity that his life and possessions were safe, but it was advisable for him to accept Islam. Safwan requested two months grace to study and think about Islam. The Prophet said. "I'll give you not two, but four months, so

that you can choose this religion with complete knowledge and understanding." (Before four months had passed Safwan embraced Islam.(1)

Even more interesting than this is the story of how Suheil bin 'Umar become a Muslim. To use his own words, 'After the conquest of Mecca, when the Prophet of God entered the city, I went to my house and shut myself up and sent my son "Abdullah to the Prophet to request an assurance of safety, for I was not prepared to become a Muslim just to save my own life."

Abdullah came into the presence of the Prophet and said. "My father requests a promise of safety. Will you give it to him?" "The Prophet said, "Yes, he is in God's care. He can come out of his house.| then he turned to those around him and said, 'if any of you see Suheil you must not show any hostility to him. He must be allowed to come out of his house. Upon my soul, Suheil is an intelligent and honorable man, and a person like him cannot fail to understand Islam and become a Muslim."

Once he had received the assurance and heard the Prophet's words 'Abdullah left the' assembly and returned to his father

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۱- Jafar Subhani, Forough al-Abadiyat ('The splendor of eternity') Vol,II, PP, ۷۳۶-۷. Full detail of Safwan's Convention to Islam can be found in Kanzol-Ammal, Vol,X-PP.۵۰۳-۶

and told him what had happened. Suheil, perhaps not expecting that the prophet would treat him like this, said in voluntarily, "By God, as a child and a grown man he has always been a good and worthy person."

After he received this assurance of safety, Suheil, although he remained a non-believer, mixed freely with the Muslims and even accompanied the Prophet's at the battle of Hunein, without accepting Islam. Until finally at place called Ja 'rana'. He did (so.(1)

These two tales are clear example of practical biography of the Prophet of Islam in

encountering those who theoretically opposed him. These tales prove that despite what a group of orientalists claim, the goals of battles of Islam commanded by Quran decrees were removing the barriers of freedom of opinion and ploughing the ground .for the growth of correct beliefs

Freedom To Propagate Opinion In Islam

So far we have seen that Islam not only confirms freedom of expression but defends it. Now we must see whether Islam permits anyone to propagate any opinion he may .have and to communicate it to another person

On the basis of what was said about the rational attitude towards this question Islam most decidedly cannot permit the absolute right to propagate opinion. To explain the matter further, the following brief summary is necessary: Propagation of opinion sometimes takes the form of reasoning and submission of proof, with the propagandist genuinely basing his arguments on reason and logic, and sometimes it takes the form of demagogy and the transmission of false beliefs by means

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.("Further details are given in the article "Kurnameh Islam" ("The Islamic record -۱

.of trickery and guile

In the case of opinions which have their origins in thought and logic, to the extent that they rely on reason and logic and argument and proof, their propagation and dissemination, and hence the freedom to propagate them, are included in the category of freedom of expression, and here the Islamic attitude has been fully .explained

But demagoguery for the purpose of communicating opinions which lack a logical base and are harmful to society is something that reason cannot justify-as has .already been explained-nor can Islam confirm it against the dictates of reason

To sum up briefly, we may say that in Islam the expression of opinion is free, but

.(demagogy for the transmission of false opinions to the people is forbidden(١

Freedom Of Opinion In The World Today

The final question that must be discussed in this chapter is the question of freedom of opinion in the world today, what are the motives for promoting this freedom in international circles, particularly in Europe, and what objectives the world of ?imperialism is pursuing in its support for this freedom

We can say that the promotion of the idea of freedom of opinion in the world today is a social reaction to the inquisition that the fathers of the Church carried out in the Middle Ages. They did not allow anyone to express an opinion, even an opinion unconnected with religious matters that was contrary to what the Church taught. For example, because the Church taught that the sun revolved around the earth no one was entitled even if

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Mohammad Khatim Peyambaran," "Mohammad the seal of the Prophets" vol.II.PP." -١ ٥٩-٧١

he submitted logical arguments and proofs to show that the sentenced thousands of .scholars to be burned alive

Giordano Bruno, an Italian priest and one such scholar, was sentenced to be burned at the stake in the year ١۶٠٠, on charges that he had expressed the belief that 'Anyone who has reached the age of reason can reach an opinion about the world and life in conformity with his rational and deductive faculties.' The court considered this opinion to be a proof of his opposition to Christianity, since in the Court's view every Christian who reaches the age of reason must adopt belief's about the world in accordance with the Holy bible, and not in accordance with his rational and deductive faculties. By expressing his views Bruno proved himself to be an apostate. His apostasy was due to the Devil entering his body and therefore he must be burned so as the exercise the !Devil

In addition, religion, in the view of those who control international politics and the philosophers inspired by these polices, is no more than a pastime and pastimes are not concerned with matters such as right or wrong. Religion, in their view, is like a piece of poetry or a film. As Shahid Ostad 'Alameh Mottahari says: 'In the view that concerns only the personal conscience of the individual, regardless of what that religion is, whether, for example, it's idolatry, such as calf-worship, or worship of ...God

Regarding the question of religion, since they do not want to admit'

p: ۱۵۱

to the reality of religion and prophethood or accept that prophets really came from God to reveal the true path to man, and that man's happiness lies in following this true path, they say instead, "we don't know what they reality and origin of religions are, .but we do realize that man cannot live without religion

One of the essential conditions of human life, one of the pastimes and distractions in man's life, is that he occupies himself with this thing known as religion. It does not make any difference whether the object he decides to worship is a monotheistic God a man called Jesus Christ, or a calf or an object made of metal or wood. So nobody ought to be persecuted for their beliefs, and whatever a person's individual (preference is, it's quite all right.(۱

As has been pointed out, such attitudes towards religion are not inspired by ideas that are based on philosophy, but by ideas that use science and philosophy for political .ends

If those in charge of imperialist policies pretend to be in favor of freedom of opinion it's not because they really want everyone to be free to express his opinion so that correct beliefs might develop, and people be liberated from superstition, since such freedom would be against the interests for their political power. Instead, they want to distract people's minds so that they can more easily achieve their anti-popular .political object

And since the best narcotic pastime is religion without politics, and superstitious religious beliefs, there

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.About the Islamic Revolution -۱

is no difference between the various false religious, so they judge it to be in their political interests to declare religious opinions to be free, so long as these do not .conflict with their interests

But if a religion tries to gain to the world of politics, and became instrumental to the development of correct beliefs and the liberation of the masses from the bondage of incorrect belief, and hence from the domination of imperialism, this religion is not only deemed illicit by the very champions of freedom of opinion, but it's followers are destroyed by these same exponents of freedom of thought, on the pretend of the .defense of freedom

Chapter ۷: The Teaching Ideology

point

By the virtue of the fact that the purpose of a course of instruction in ideological principles is to teach ideology before embarking on such a course we should address :a number of questions. These are as following

If we bear in mind the fact that a person's opinions and beliefs are not within his .۱ power to control; but like love are involuntary phenomena(۱) is the teaching of opinion ?fundamentally possible? Can one teach love

If research is necessary in ideology(۲), and everyone has a duty both from the .۲ rational and religious point of view to seek out correct opinions. Is it net better to encourage people to investigate and research their opinions instead of being taught them? And is it not the teaching of ideology, in the scene of transferring an opinion from teacher to pupil, a form

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۱- See previous chapter under 'Freedom to choose one's opinions P. ۱۰۸.

۲- See Chapter III of this Introduction.

of Taqlid? And finally, why is the teaching necessary?

۳. How many methods are there for the teaching of ideology? And in the lessons that follow which of these methods will be used to teach the principles if Islamic ideology?

These question will be answer under the following headings:

Can Ideology Be Taught?

It has already been explained that although ideology is neither within a person's power to adopt as he wishes, nor within another's power to impose forcibly on him,(۱) by changing the source of beliefs it is possible to change incorrect and unscientific opinions. In other words, if the ideological basis is Taqlid, by breaking the chain of Taqlid, opinions can be changed, and if the basis is inadequate research then by means of more an adequate research scientific opinions can be substituted for follower ones.

It is the same with love. Although love is not within a person's control, and cannot be imposed on him, by changing the object of love it is possible to destroy it and even to transform it into hatred and it is also possible to transform an absence of love or even hatred into love and interest. As the mystic poet says:

'When I was bound apprentice

My father bless his soul.

Spoke these words to my master,

"Let love be his one goal".'

The teaching of love consists of the provision of instruction which caution the pupil

against becoming attached to being the love of which is harmful and stress him ,towards things the love of which is beneficial. In other words

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***.See previous Chapter under 'Freedom to choose one's opinions' p -۱

the teaching of love is training a person to avoid worthless loves and instead to nature .love which are innate and real

The teaching of ideology is just the same. In other words, it consists of the provision of instruction which alienates a person from false and unscientific beliefs, and .inculcates in him correct and scientific beliefs. And clearly this is a feasible goal

The Need To Teach Ideology

No knowledge, to be is so essential for a person to acquire as ideology, or the science of opinion. In this connection, there is a valuable hadith of Imam Baqer, an address to Jaber bin Yazid Ja 'fi, who had sought his advice: 'Know that there is no science to equal that which safeguards one's health, and there is no health so important as the (health of one's soul'.(۱

Indeed, no science is so valuable as that which ensures the health of a person's heart and soul, since the standard of judgment of any science is the service it provided man, and man can only put science to work and benefit from knowledge if he is healthy. A person's health, in turn, has two dimensions. The first is his physical health, and the second is his psychological health. Now since psychological health is the more essential form of these dimensions it follows that a science which safeguards a person's psyche is the most of all sciences, and it's study has a higher than does any other science in terms of improving a person's life and curing the ills of

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.Mizan Hadith No. ۱۳۸۳۸ -۱

human society

.human society

Proof that the science of ideology safeguards a person's psychological health is provided by the fact that opinion is grafted on the his mind and soul, and as was explained in Chapter I of this introduction, unscientific grafts and incorrect beliefs cause a person's inner and real form and structure to deviate from their natural state, .and this unnatural condition makes him morally sick

The subsequent tendency towards wrong attitudes causes his individual and social life to be diverted from its natural course. Since the science of ideology prevents unscientific and fallacious beliefs from being grafted on to a person's psyche, it is a safeguard of his psychological well-being, and therefore must be considered the most valuable of all sciences and the study of which has a greater priority than any other .form knowledge

Compulsory Education

Article ۱۳ of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that primary education .should be compulsory and free for all

If you were to have asked the signatories of this declaration why they had thus deprived illiterates of their liberty, why they did not wish to allow them to exercise the option of remaining illiterate, and what their reason was for insisting on compulsory education, their reply would undoubtedly have been that a minimum start of literacy is .essential for everyone

We accept this view and the Prophet of Islam some thirteen centuries ago ordinary the acquisition of knowledge to be a religious duty incumbent on every male and (female Muslim.(۱

Our disagreement with these gentlemen is over the question

p: ۱۵۶

.Mizan hadith No.۱۳۴۴۵ -۱

of why they made literacy compulsory on the grounds that it is essential in life, but

of why they made literacy compulsory on the grounds that it is essential in life, but .made no mention of the teaching of correct opinions

Is minimum standard of literacy a necessity, but correct opinions which guide life in a proper direction not such a necessity? Which is more harmful for a person, wrong opinions or illiteracy? Do illiterates create more trouble for themselves and others, or ?literate people with false opinions, wrong ideas and psychological deviations

The truth of the matter is that if we judge man's essential requirements for life equitably and without considering political interests we see that nothing is more essential than psychological health, because if a person does not possess this he cannot benefit from a healthy body, or from knowledge and science, or indeed from anything else. As was stated in the words of Imam Baqer, the science which ensures a person's health in this field is the most essential thing a person should know. This makes it necessary for the way to be prepared for everybody to be taught ideology, .and such instruction, like literacy, should be universal and obligatory

As for the objection that the teaching of ideology amounts to the conveying the opinions of the teacher to the pupil by means of blind obedience and Taqlid, the answer is quite clear, since Taqlid consists of accepting the views of others without reason or proof, and ideological instruction that is based on reason and proof cannot be considered Taqlid. Moreover, if instruction in ideological studies

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is considered to be Taqlid then all classes in which the various sciences are taught .must be so considered

Finally, the proposal that instead of ideological instruction people should be encouraged to study and research opinions for themselves cannot be carried put without formal instruction. Because a study of ideological problems, although it may require no more instruction than the other sciences, certainly does not requires less than they do, and if literacy classes need a classroom and a teacher how can it to be !?said ideological instruction does not need a teacher

:It can be said that there are all three methods of teaching ideological principles

.The method of the philosophers (١

(The method of the scholars.(١ (٢

.The method of the divinely-inspired prophets (٣

Each of these three groups-philosophers, scholars divinely-inspired prophets-have discussed the question of ideological principles, but each has its own particular .method of explaining them

The method used by the prophets to teach the principles of ideology has two important and fundamental characteristics which the method of the philosophers and .scholastics does not have. These are: universality and comprehensiveness

The first characteristic of the method adopted by the prophets in teaching ideological principles is that it is universal, and addresses all classes of society, unlike the method (of the philosophers and scholastics, which is directed at specific audiences.(٢

The audience of the philosophers and scholastics are special individual who understand their particular language and style, and not the people as a whole. In other words when philosophers and scholastics discuss ideological questions or write

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For an understanding of the method used by the philosophers and scholastics see -٢
.(Mortahari's Ravesh-haye Fikr Eslami (Islamic Intellectual processes

books they are not talking to the general public. Their audience is solely people with an interest in and specialized knowledge of philosophy or scholasticism, and have studied these subjects is intend to do so; hence their words and writings cannot be .appreciated by the general public

But the audience of the prophets is everybody. They are the teachers and mentors of all mankind. In matters of ideology they refer everybody to reason, argument and proof. Their audience is not only people who have studied or intend to study philosophy, or whose inclinations and talents are towards scholasticism. Their message is not addressed solely to scholars and students, or to any other specific .social group

Every social group or class is addressed by the prophet of God, so they must talk in a manner that everybody can benefit from, and in ideological fields they must reason in such a way that is universally comprehensible as well as being useful and convincing .to all classes of society, from the most learned to the most illiterate

The second characteristic of the method used by the prophets of God in teaching ideology is its comprehensiveness. In the method used by the philosophers and scholastics beliefs are discussed without reference to action, and the ideological argument consists of a series of dry scholarly discussions divorced from social, political and moral activity. But in the prophets, method ideological discussion is particularly comprehensive, and belief and action are examined in relation to each .other

Instruction in the principles of

p: ۱۵۹

ideology that utilizes this method, while introducing a person to deep scientific and philosophic arguments in matter relating to the origins of life and the resurrection of the dead can also reach him the most delicate question of mysticism, and explained .the most precise questions of economics, politics and sociology to him

In other words, the principles of ideology, when taught according to the prophet method, are a mixture philosophy, mysticism, sociology, economics and ethics. The nature of this comprehensiveness to the extent that the writer’s scientific ability .permits-will be illustrated in the course of the lectures that follow

Our Method of Teaching Ideological Principles

In view of the universality and comprehensiveness of the method used by the prophets in teaching ideological principles, as explained above the writer has chosen this method. Rather than the method of the philosophers or scholars, that is, he will try as far as possible to make the discussion universal, understandable to all, and at the same time comprehensive. To this end, the overall plan of the discussions and the structure of the lectures will be taken from the words of the divinely-inspired .prophets

In other words, the reason found in the Quran or the words of the prophets and Imams regarding ideological matters will be gathered analyzed and commented on. This does not mean to say that in ideological discussions that require pure rational interpretation we will rely on the Quran and Hadith, but rather that the purely intellectual reasoning are taken from the Quran and hadith and subjected to .explanation and study

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We will also show how the divinely-inspired prophets, who always referred people to their reason in matters of ideological principles, themselves use to prove the opinions they invited the people to adopt. We will also show whether or not these arguments .are convincing from the rational point of view

The selection of this method, furthermore, may achieve two other results: it may prove the scientific miracles of the prophets, and it may show their immunity from .ideological error

In a hadith already quoted in our discussion of Taqlid Imam Sadeq says: 'When a person knows his religion from the book of God, mountains will be moved before he abandons his beliefs, whereas a person who becomes involved in a business through ignorance may also leave it through ignorance.(۱)

The teaching of ideological principles according to the method of prophets establishes belief in the origins of life and the resurrection of the dead in a person's heart with a firmness that the very mountains of the earth cannot mated. See how firmly and

peacefully the mountains are set in the around the plains. A person's religious beliefs which have been implanted in his heart by the instruction of the prophets are even firmer than this, for as the Imam says mountains may move before such beliefs will .change

A Suggestion To Committed Artists

One of the characteristics of the method which we have chosen, inspired by the method used by the prophets, to teach ideological principles is that it enables committed artist to convert ideological questions and discussions into image-form

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(See P. ---(P.۴l of Persian -۱

.for presentation on stage

To take an example some of the questions discussed in this Introduction could be very interestingly acted on stage: the Battle of the Camel and the question which Imam 'Ali was asked by the Bedouin Arab in the midst of the battle and the Imam's reply explaining the importance of ideological debate: the question of Taqlid could be shown by the way supporters of political organizations and groups copy their leaders in ideological matters and blindly follow the party-line; people suffering from self-delusion and pseudo-knowledge could be portrayed as could really wise people, who .refer to the authority of their reason in matters of belief

All of these could be most effective in publicizing ideological discussion and even in exporting the culture of the Revolution and creating cultural revolutions in Islamic and non-Islamic countries. In other words, putting ideological questions and discussions into theatrical form is a way of adopting the allegorical method which the prophets .used to explain intellectual problems to the masses

If we study the Quran and the words of the prophets and Imams we see that they often used parables to explain an intellectual question. A parable can turn a rational idea into a mental picture, and give it cinema or television screen, and this is much

.more effective than a parable in illustrating reality

In other words, we can explain ideological and intellectual questions by means of television or film images so as to complement the use move by the prophets of ,parables. Committed artist

p: ۱۶۲

inspired by the prophets' method, can play a useful, effective and delusive role in enhancing society's awareness and intellectual maturity and mobilizing the people of .the world towards authentic Islamic beliefs

The writer would therefore like to propose to committed artists that they should try to bring ideological questions and principles of Islamic belief to theatrical form in a respectable and appropriate way. It is of course realized that this is no easy task, yet .it should not be impossible

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About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ۹

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ۲۰۰۷, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and

accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the cyberspace.

Our Goals are:

-propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t)

-encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues

-replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers

-providing services for seminary and university researchers

-spreading culture study in the publich

-paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works

Policies:

-acting according to the legal licenses

-relationship with similar centers

-avoiding parallel working

-merely presenting scientific contents

-mentioning the sources

It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author.

Other activities of the institute:

-Publication of books, booklets and other editions

-Holding book reading competitions

-Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism places

-Producing animations, computer games and etc.

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

Designing systems of accounting, media and mobile, automatic and handy systems,- web kiosks

Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

Holding virtual teacher-training courses-

Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

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